

105207, PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOOD & CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

SELECTED SPEECHES
OF THE LATE
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

ARRANGED AND EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES
BY
T. E. KEBBEL, M.A.

With a Portrait

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II.

LONDON,
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1882

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OUR RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, Feb. 18, 1853.¹

[The object of this speech was the same as many others delivered by Mr. Disraeli about the same date, to show, namely, that the coalition ministry of Lord Aberdeen was bound together by no common principles either of foreign or domestic policy. On the present occasion he quoted speeches of Lord John Russell, Sir James Graham, and Sir Charles Wood on the Government lately established in France by Louis Napoleon, and asked which of the three expressed the opinion of the cabinet. The most interesting and amusing part of the present speech begins at page 15.]

SIR, I wish before the House goes into Committee of Supply, to make some inquiries of Her Majesty's Government with respect to our relations with France. It is the most important subject of modern politics. We have now, Sir, for nearly forty years, had the blessing of peace between Great Britain and France. During that interval the social relations of the two countries have become various and multiplied. Our commercial transactions during that interval have gradually, progressively, and considerably increased; and at the right opportunity, and under favourable circumstances, no doubt, with enlightened legislation, those commercial transactions are susceptible of considerable, and perhaps indefinite, development.

There are two countries which may be esteemed first-class Powers, between whom all questions of high policy are so far identical. It is somewhat strange when we have so many guarantees for a permanent good understanding between the two countries, so many securities for that peace which we desire—when the past, by the long interval of tranquillity that has occurred, proves that practically there are sources of security

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

which are valid and sufficient—it is extremely strange and startling that, under such circumstances, an idea should seem to have entered into almost every man's brain, and an expression into every man's mouth, that we are on the eve of a rupture with that country.

I don't think it unreasonable, therefore, that on going into Committee of Supply, when we are about to vote large sums to sustain the armaments of the country, I should make some inquiries of Her Majesty's Government on a subject of such absorbing interest, and offer a few remarks to the House with respect to it before they go into Committee. All must feel that on such a topic it is of the highest importance that no false opinion should take possession of the public mind, because in a free country, opinion is one of the securities of peace, as it is also sometimes one of the causes of war, and it is by discussion, which is the life and soul of a society like ours, that we arrive at the truth on subjects which often to the danger and peril of the community become perplexed and obscure.

I know, Sir, there are persons in both countries—persons born and bred probably during the last great struggle—who are of opinion that there is a natural hostility between the French and the English nations. They are persons who may probably be placed in the same list with those who think, or used to think, that five per cent is the natural rate of interest. But at the same time they are persons influenced in many instances by very sincere and patriotic feelings, and their opinions, though they may be inveterate prejudices, are not to be despised at a conjuncture like the present. I know, Sir, that to persons influenced by such a conviction, it is in vain to appeal by any of those economical considerations which are often mentioned in the present day. I know that it is in vain to impress on them that, in an age favourable to industry, ancient and civilised communities are diverted from thoughts of war. I know that it is in vain to appeal to the higher impulse of that philanthropy which many of us believe in such communities, in societies under such conditions of great antiquity and advanced civilisation to be mitigating the hearts of nations. But, Sir, I think it right to appeal to stern facts,

which cannot be disputed—to the past conduct of men, which, according to the theories of these individuals, is the best test of what their future behaviour will be ; and I must say that I do not see that the history of the past justifies the too prevalent opinion, that between England and France there is a natural rivalry and hostility. I know very well, Sir, that if you go back to ancient history—or rather to the ancient history of the two countries—that you may appeal to Cressy and Poitiers, and to Agincourt, and believe there has always been a struggle between the two countries, and that that struggle has always redounded to the glory of England.

But it should be remembered these were not so much wars between France and England as between the King of France and the King of England as a French prince—that the latter was fighting for his provinces of Picardy or Aquitaine—and that, in fact, it was not a struggle between the two nations. I take it for granted that, in considering this point, our history need not go back to a more distant period than to that happy hour when the keys of Calais were fortunately delivered over for ever to the care of a French monarch ; and, when we take that view, which is the real point of our modern history, as one that should guide us on this subject, we shall observe that the most sagacious sovereigns and the most eminent statesmen of England, almost without exception, have held that the French alliance, or a cordial understanding with the French nation, should be the corner-stone of our diplomatic system, and the keynote of our foreign policy.

No one can deny that both Queen Elizabeth and the Lord Protector looked to that alliance as the basis of their foreign connections. No one can deny that there was one subject on which even the brilliant Bolingbroke and the sagacious Walpole agreed—and that was the great importance of cultivating an alliance or good understanding with France.¹ At a later date the most eminent of the statesmen of this country, Mr. Pitt, formed his system on this principle, and entered public life to establish a policy which, both for political considerations

¹ On this head see some interesting remarks by Professor Ranke, *History of England*, vol. v. p. 393.

and commercial objects, mainly depended on an alliance and good understanding with the French nation. And, therefore, Sir, it is not true that there has been at all times, or at most times, a want of sympathy in England with the French people; but, on the contrary, the converse is the truth; and the alliance and good understanding that has prevailed between us have, in my opinion, been a source of great advantage to both countries, and has advanced the civilisation of Europe. Even what has occurred in our time proves, I think, the truth that the natural tendency of the influences that regulate both countries is to peace; because the fact that, after such extraordinary events as the European revolutions at the end of the last and the beginning of this century, the great struggle that occurred, and the great characters that figured in it—the fact that all should terminate in a peace of so permanent a character as that which has prevailed proves the tendency of all those causes which influence the conduct of both nations, and which lead to peace, from a conviction of its advantage to both countries. I will not, therefore, dwell further upon this point, except to express my protest against the dogma which, I am sorry to see, has been revived of late—not merely in England, although it is too prevalent in this country—that there is a feeling of natural hostility between the nations of Great Britain and France.

Sir, there are undoubtedly more novel and more important causes to which may be imputed the present unfortunate opinion that is prevalent on the subject of our relations with France, and the first, and the most important, unquestionably, may be found in the increase of the armaments of this country. There are many who say, whatever may be the assertions of statesmen, whatever may be the public declaration of persons in authority, whatever may be the judgment formed by sensible and unimpassioned men of the circumstances of the hour, no one can deny the stern conclusion that the Government of this country feels the responsibility devolving upon it of increasing its armaments; and with what object can it be increasing its armaments unless it is from a fear of some imminent and impending danger from a foreign foe, and, if from a foreign foe, of course the nearest and the most warlike of those that can be our enemies?

Now, Sir, there is a great deal very plausible on the face of this position ; nevertheless, the real truth is, that there is not in the circumstance of those armaments the slightest foundation for the belief that they have been occasioned by recent transactions in France, or by the appearance of any particular characters who have taken a leading part in the transactions of that country. The origin of the increase of our armaments for the defence of this country is of a date much more remote than the incidents which are appealed to as the cause of those increased armaments. The origin of completing and increasing the defence of this country finds itself in those great changes which have occurred in most of the affairs of life, which have principally been occasioned by the application of science to the business of life, and which application of science has not, among many circumstances and subjects, spared the art of war. Those who from their position were responsible for the defence of this country, who from their character and their talents were best calculated to observe the great changes that in this respect were occurring, long and many years ago called the attention of the executive Government of this country to that important subject. But we all know, especially in free and popular communities, that the few are sensible of the necessity of change before the multitude are convinced of that necessity, and that it is extremely difficult to bring the great body of a community to agree to a change, of the necessity of which they are not convinced. And the Government of this country many years ago attempted to adapt the position of the country, with respect to its means of defence, more to the present resources for that object which now prevail ; but they found, of course, extreme difficulty in obtaining the assistance of the House of Commons for this object, when increased expenditure was a necessary condition of the change ; and therefore for a long time the efforts were few and feeble ; although the convictions of the cabinet of the day were deep and earnest upon the subject.

Well, Sir, there then happened, some ten years ago, during the Government of Sir R. Peel, a very unexpected incident, that startled even the two nations themselves at the possibility of a war occurring between the two countries. The cause was

almost a contemptible cause when we think of the stake at issue; but there is no doubt, without now inquiring into the peculiar circumstances which brought the crisis to such a fine position, that for a short time the possibility of war between England and France was not entirely out of question. Well, Sir, the Government of that day—ten years ago—took advantage, of course, of the public mind being somewhat startled and alarmed upon the subject, and endeavoured, even when the immediate danger had passed, to lead the public mind to the consideration of the important question which never slept in the councils of the cabinet; and there were some efforts, and not contemptible efforts, by the Government of Sir Robert Peel at least, to commence a new system with regard to the public defences of the country. The people of this country learnt for the first time that a great revolution had occurred in the art of war, that that revolution had deprived them of their ancient and, as it were, natural sources of defence, and they began generally to entertain the idea that they must adopt other means for their defence. So far the question advanced; but, as the fulfilment of what was necessary was, of course, attended with large and increased expenditure, and as there was a natural objection always to increasing our expenditure for the sake of armaments, in the House of Commons, the question, though it became, as far as the country was concerned, from that time a question that never entirely slept, yet advanced but slowly. There was controversy still whether the country was sufficiently defended or not, whether the ancient means were so completely superseded as they were represented to be: there was a lingering superstition in reference to ‘the wooden walls of old England.’

Suddenly we had a series of revolutions on the Continent, a period of great alarm and of great disturbance. The people of this country were at last convinced that the dream of perpetual tranquillity and of continual improvement might be closed. That was a time when again an opportunity was offered to the Government of the day to lead popular opinion in the direction which it wished, so far as the defence of the country was concerned. The words of one of the greatest of our men were then prevalent round every hearth, and public opinion

at last assumed the form of an earnest desire to complete the defences of the country. I have no doubt, Sir, that whatever Government existed, they would loyally and completely have fulfilled that which was necessary to be done. It fell to the lot of the late Government to meet the requirements in this respect of England. I claim no merit for the late Government more than that to which they are fairly entitled in having earnestly endeavoured in this respect to do their duty. When they acceded to office the question of the national defences was ripe. No doubt if the Government of the noble lord (Lord John Russell) had continued in office, they would have done all that was required; it fell to us, however, to fulfil that duty, and briefly I would place before the House what we did in that respect. During the time that we were responsible for the administration of affairs with regard to the national defences, we established a Militia upon a popular principle—a principle which at the time was much derided, but which, notwithstanding the opposition that we received, we adhered to, and which succeeded in producing a body that commands, so far as a new force of that character can, the confidence, and, I may say, the respect of the country. Sir, we secondly placed the artillery of the country—that important arm—in an efficient state. Thirdly, we introduced measures, or we prepared arrangements, which would have completely, and will completely, fortify the arsenals of the country, and some important posts upon the coast. Fourthly, we increased our navy by a proposition which, when carried into effect, will add to it 5,000 sailors and 1,500 marines; and, fifthly, we made arrangements which I have no doubt will be well completed by our successors, which would have established, or rather will establish, the national garrison in the form of a Channel fleet, an efficient Channel fleet of fifteen or sixteen sail of the line, with an adequate number of frigates and smaller vessels, and which, when these plans are completed—and I trust they will be speedily completed—will allow a Channel fleet of that force to rendezvous at a very short notice from three or four ports. Into that fleet will be introduced all those modern improvements of scientific machinery which now are available.

These, Sir, were the plans which we thought it our duty to submit to the approbation of Parliament, and which received the approbation of Parliament—plans which, in our opinion, when completed, will fulfil all that is necessary for the defence of the country.

I was very glad to hear from the noble lord the Secretary of State, on the first night of our meeting, that Her Majesty's ministers do not propose any increase of the army. That was a subject which we felt it our duty well to consider, and it certainly was our opinion that no such increase was necessary. I have noticed these points in some detail, because it must be remembered that one of the principal grounds for believing that the friendly relations between France and England are about to be broken is the increase of the armaments of this country. Myself, however humbly, in a certain degree responsible for that increase, I wish to take this opportunity of pointing out the fallacy of that conclusion. Whoever might sit upon the throne of France, whether it be a Bourbon or a Bonaparte, whatever might have been the form of government, however disturbed or however tranquil the state of Europe, those who were responsible for the administration of affairs in this country—I care not from what party or from what section they might be selected—would sooner or later have felt it their duty to place the country in a state of defence; that duty arising from the great change which has taken place in the art of war, and the means by which offensive or defensive operations are now conducted. In the circumstance, therefore, that England has increased its armament for self-defence I find no reason for a moment to think that there is any authority for the too prevalent belief to which I have alluded.

Sir, there is one other cause, also of a novel character, which has been alleged—which is daily alleged—for the belief in this impending rupture, and which no doubt is exceedingly prevalent and influential, and that is the troubled state of France during latter years—troubles which have terminated in what I think is fallaciously styled a military dynasty. Now, there can be no doubt that the founder of the dynasty that now reigns in France was one of the greatest conquerors, not only of modern but of

all ages ; but it does not follow—and history, indeed, contradicts the position—that the descendants of a conqueror are necessarily his rivals. Generally speaking, those who follow a conqueror are inclined to peaceable pursuits ; and when we find that the present Emperor of the French, who in a *certain sense* must be said to owe his throne to his connection with a great conqueror, is not even by profession a military man, we find a circumstance which further enforces the truth of the observation I have made.

But then it is said that there is in France a military Government, and that that country is at this moment regulated by the army. But there is a great error also, I apprehend, if history is to guide us, in assuming that because a country is governed by an army that army must be extremely anxious to conquer other countries. When armies are anxious for conquest it is because their position at home is uneasy, because their authority is not recognised, and because their power is not felt. It is the army returning from conquest that attempts to obtain supreme power in the State ; but if an army does possess supreme power, you very rarely find that restless desire for foreign aggression which is supposed to be the inevitable characteristic of a military force. Now, there is one remarkable characteristic of the present military Government in France, that that Government has not been occasioned by the ambition of the army, but by the solicitation of classes of civilians, of large bodies of the industrial population who, frightened, whether rightly or wrongly, by a state of disturbances and, as they supposed, of menacing anarchy, turned to the only disciplined body at command which they thought could secure order. I am led, therefore, to the belief that in the circumstance that there is a dynasty founded by a conqueror, but which is not a warlike dynasty, and that France is governed by the army, not in consequence of the military ambition of the troops, but in consequence of the disquietude of the citizens, there is no reason for that great anxiety which is now prevalent.

I know, Sir, there is another cause, notwithstanding, which may occasion extreme embarrassment and dispute. Although I think I have shown to the House—if that were, indeed, neces-

sary—that the increase of our armaments has not been occasioned by anything but the inevitable necessity of placing this country in a state of safety and defence, and not by any changes in foreign countries; and although I have shown the House some cause to believe that the state of affairs in France does not necessarily, as some suppose, lead to military aggression; yet, Sir, I admit that there are reasons at this moment which should make men uneasy, and that there are causes of misconception between the two nations which cannot be watched too narrowly, and which, if neglected, may lead to disastrous consequences: and I proceed now to advert to them. There is no doubt that there is a considerable prejudice in this country against the present ruler of France—I say it without reserve—for two reasons. It is understood that in acceding to power he has terminated what we esteem a Parliamentary Constitution, and that he has abrogated the liberty of the Press. I wish to put the case—I think it best to put the case—as fairly as I can before the House, as the object of these observations is to put an end to what I think—to what I hope—is a very mistaken feeling, and to elicit from Her Majesty's Government explanations which I trust will substantiate that belief on my side.

I have no doubt—we know—there is a prejudice against the present ruler of France on these two grounds. It is unnecessary for me to say that it is not probable I shall ever say or do anything which would tend to depreciate the influence or to diminish the power of Parliament or the Press. My greatest honour is to be a member of this House, in which all my thoughts and feelings are concentrated; and as for the Press, I am myself a 'gentleman of the Press,' and I bear no other scutcheon. I know well the circumstances under which we have obtained in this country the blessing of a free Press. It is only a century and a half ago since we got rid of the censorship; and when we had got rid of the censorship we had a law of libel which, for nearly a century, rendered that freedom of the Press a most perilous privilege. Until Mr. Fox's great Act upon the law of libel, no public writer could have been said to be safe in this country. I mention that to remind the House how very recent is the date of our real enjoyment of the Press.

in this country, because we are mainly indebted to Mr. Fox for that great privilege ; and the House will recollect that during the interval—not a very long interval, little more than half a century—that liberty of the Press has been often modified, often interfered with by British ministers ; and that modification and that interference have always been sanctioned by British Parliaments. I hope we live in happier times than those which preceded us in that respect. I hope we have arrived at a conclusion in this country that if the Press is free, it should enjoy a complete freedom ; that the best protection against the excesses of the Press is the spirit of discussion, which is the principle upon which our society at present depends ; and I think that all parties in this country have come to the conclusion that the liberty of the Press is the most valuable of our public privileges, because, in fact, it secures and guarantees the enjoyment of all the rest ; but, at the same time, it is always advisable, when we make observations on the conduct of foreign nations, that we should be perfectly satisfied that the circumstances in those countries to which we are applying the opinions prevalent in our own are identical with the circumstances in which we ourselves are placed.

Now, Sir, with all my love of the liberty of the Press, with all my confidence that we have arrived at a state of society in England which will prevent any minister at any time ever again attempting to interfere with that liberty of the Press, I am still conscious that we enjoy it in this country on certain conditions, which do not, in my opinion, prevail in other countries : namely, of a long established order, a habit of freedom of discussion, and, above all, an absence of all those circumstances and of all those causes, many of which are disturbing society in other countries.

Now, I will take a case as an example. Suppose that in England at this moment we had the greatest of all political evils—let us suppose that, instead of our happy settlement, we had a disputed succession. Let us suppose that we had a young Charles Stuart, for example, at this moment at Breda, or a young Oliver Cromwell at Bordeaux, publishing their manifestoes, and sending their missives to powerful parties of

their adherents in this country. We may even suppose other contingencies. Let us suppose that we had had, in the course of a few years, great revolutions in this country—that the form of our government had been changed—that our free and famous monarchy had been subverted, and that a centralised republic had been established by an energetic minority—that that minority had been insupportable, and that the army had been called in by the people generally to guard them from the excesses which they had experienced. Do you think that, under any of these circumstances, you would be quite sure of enjoying the same liberty of the Press which you enjoy at this moment? Do you think that in the midst of revolutions, with a disputed succession, secret societies, and military rule, you would be quite certain of having your newspaper at your breakfast table every morning?

Sir, these are considerations which ought to guide us when we are giving an opinion upon the conduct of rulers of other nations. There is no doubt the circumstance that the present ruler of France has stopped that liberty of the Press which we so much prize has occasioned great odium against him in this country, and has irritated the feelings of the powerful Press of England against the French Government. I myself speak on this subject with no other feelings towards the Emperor of the French than that feeling of respect which we ought all to entertain for any sovereign whom Her gracious Majesty has recognised and admitted into the fraternity of monarchs. I am not ashamed or afraid to say that I, for one, deplore what has occurred and sympathise with the fallen.

Some years ago I had occasion frequently to visit France. I found that country then under the mild sway of a constitutional monarch, of a prince who, from temper as well as from policy, was humane and beneficent. I know, Sir, that at that time the Press was free. I know that at that time the Parliament of France was in existence, and distinguished by its eloquence and a dialectic power that probably even this, our own House of Commons, has never surpassed. I know that under these circumstances France arrived at a height of material prosperity which it had never before reached. I know, also,

that after a reign of unbroken prosperity of long duration, when he was aged, when he was in sorrow, and when he was suffering under overwhelming indisposition, this same prince was rudely expelled from his capital, and was denounced as a poltroon by all the journals of England because he did not command his troops to fire upon his people. Well, Sir, other powers and other princes have since occupied his seat, who have asserted their authority in a very different way, and are denounced by the same organs as tyrants because they did order the troops to fire upon the people.

I said, Sir, that I deplore the past and sympathise with the fallen. I think every man has a right to have his feelings upon these subjects; but what is the moral I presume to draw from these circumstances? It is this: that it is extremely difficult to form an opinion upon French politics; and that so long as the French people are exact in their commercial transactions, and friendly in their political relations, it is just as well that we should not interfere with their management of their domestic concerns. (Loud cheers.) I am glad to find the House is of the opinion which I have ventured to express upon this important subject. I do not say that it is not certainly the privilege of the English Press, or of any foreign Press, to make any observations they may please upon the conduct of foreign rulers, and upon the conduct of foreign nations. It is an affair of discretion; it is an affair of public wisdom. Our Constitution has entrusted the writers in public journals with the privilege of expressing their opinions; they have a very responsible position; they must consider what is the tendency, and what may be the consequences, of their acts; they have a right, however, to act, and no British minister and no foreign potentate can question the power which they exercise.

Well, Sir, what was the feeling of the Government of the noble lord opposite (Lord John Russell) upon the subject to which I am alluding? It is important to know what was the feeling, and what were the opinions of the noble lord when he himself was at the head of the Government. It is a pleasure to turn to 'Hansard,' not to twit and taunt an honourable gentleman with some quotation which may impugn his consis-

tency, but to refer to a statement of views becoming a person filling the noble lord's exalted position, and expressed with all that propriety and terseness of language which distinguish him.

This was the declaration of the noble lord in 1852, about a year ago, almost immediately before he quitted office. These expressions were delivered in another Parliament, there are many gentlemen present who did not listen to them, they are peculiarly apposite to the present moment. An acquaintance with the opinions of a great minister at such a period must be interesting to all, and therefore I shall make no excuse for bringing before the House the views which the noble lord then professed, and which I most sincerely believe he now entertains.

'Thus, however,' said the noble lord, on February 3, 1852, 'I am bound to say, that the President of France, with the large means of information which he possesses, has no doubt taken that course from a consideration of the state of the country, and that the course which he has taken is that best fitted to secure the welfare of the country over which he rules. Let me restate what I have said on this subject.'

The House will observe that the noble lord spoke with perfect calmness. It was not a speech in reply. It was a speech delivered on the first night of the session. It was a statement well matured and voluntarily made, and, that he may not be mistaken, the noble lord begs permission of the House to give a summary of his views, and to restate them. 'Let me restate,' said the noble lord, 'what I have said upon this subject.'

'I stated I could not give my approbation to the conduct of the President, but I have no reason to doubt, and everything I have heard confirms that opinion, that in the opinion of the President of France the three things which I have mentioned—namely, putting an end to the French Constitution, preventing the elections of 1852, and the abolition of the Parliamentary Constitution—were all measures conclusive, and perhaps essential, to the welfare of France. But I have something to state further, because I confess I have seen with very great regret the language which has been used by a portion of the Press

of this country with respect to the President of France and the affairs of that country. I remember something as a boy, and I have read more, of that which occurred during the peace of Amiens, which rendered that peace of so short a duration, and which involved these two great nations in the most bloody hostilities which ever mangled the face of Europe. I believe that temperate discussion, temperate negotiation between the two countries, might have averted the calamity of war with England, but that the language of the Press at that time was such as greatly to embitter all negotiation, and to prevent the continuance of that peace. Sir, I should deeply regret if the Press of this country at the present time were to take a similar course.'

I preferred, instead of giving my own representations of what the noble lord said, appealing to his own terse and perspicuous language. Sounder sentiments, more clearly expressed, I have never listened to; and I beg the House to understand why I am pressing this important declaration upon their attention at this moment; it is, because this is the speech of the noble lord when he was at the head of a Government, and I am anxious to ascertain to-night whether his opinions since he has taken a distinguished, but subordinate, part in a Government headed by another, may be modified, and whether we may count upon a unanimous similarity of opinion on the part of his colleagues.

There can be no doubt, upon the subject of our relations with France, at the beginning of 1852 there was a perfect union of opinion between the noble lord and his then colleagues, because in the other House the country was favoured on the same night with a declaration of opinion on this important subject, made by another person, who was for a long time a member of this House and of Her Majesty's Government, but who no longer occupies either of those positions—a noble lord who, whatever may be the difference of our political opinions, for his great abilities, his great capacity for public labour, and his unimpeachable integrity, will always in this House be mentioned and remembered with honour—I mean my Lord Grey. I will not apologise to the House for reading an extract

—it is the last I shall read—from the speech of Lord Grey, because I am sure that on this important occasion, when it is of the utmost advantage that accurate ideas upon this subject should prevail, the House will be glad to learn what Lord Grey, who cannot be doubted as a lover of public liberty, thought of the situation of France a year ago, for it may be a very efficient guide to us as to his opinions of the state of France at this moment. Lord Grey said—

‘I have the pleasure of being able to express my unqualified concurrence in, I believe, every word which the noble earl who preceded me (the Earl of Derby) uttered. I entirely agree with him as to its being the duty of this country, as a country and a nation, and the duty of each individual in his individual capacity, to abstain from any interference in the internal politics of that great and powerful nation which lies so near to us. I, like the noble lord, observe with the deepest concern, and, I may say, with the indignation which the noble earl has expressed, the tone which has been taken by a large portion of the newspaper press of this country. I think that the denunciation of the person at the head of the Government of France, coupled with those more than exaggerated—I will say, untrue—representations of the defenceless condition of this country, do not only savour of imprudence, but of something worse than imprudence, and I rejoice that the noble earl, in the position which he occupies, has come forward to assert, in the emphatic manner in which it has been done, his utter repudiation of language such as I have described. And I do trust that when, with the full assurance that I have the concurrence of my colleagues, I join in that repudiation, and when I am convinced every one of your lordships will echo the same sentiment, I do believe and hope that the mischief, the incalculable evil, which might otherwise have resulted from language thus held by a great part of the newspaper press of this country, will to a great extent be neutralised, and that it will be understood in foreign countries that, however the newspapers may express the opinions or the feelings of those who write in them, they do not express the opinions or the feelings of any great and powerful party in this country, or in the House of Parliament.’

Now, the House will observe that Lord Grey, on that occasion, entirely coincided in opinion with the noble lord who was then at the head of Her Majesty's Government in this House. I think it will be observed that on that occasion Lord Grey answered for the complete agreement of his colleagues as to the evil, not of public characters, but of anonymous writers in the Press, denouncing the ruler of France. We are clear, therefore, that on that occasion the whole of the colleagues of the noble lord in his Government were of opinion that, however lawful and legitimate the criticisms and strictures of the Press of England might be, these denunciations of the Emperor of the French were seriously to be deprecated; and that there was a most anxious desire and determination on the part of the noble lord and his Government to maintain between this country and France the most friendly relations. Well, Sir, that was the state of affairs between the two countries a year ago. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that during the period that we occupied office nothing took place that at all impaired that cordial understanding between the two countries which I may say we inherited from our predecessors.

I know well, Sir, that there are some gentlemen—some in this House—who, though they may highly esteem a friendly understanding between this country and other Powers, are apt to speak in a tone of great disparagement of the duties and the influence of diplomacy, and do not attribute to such intimate connection any great, or permanent, or advantageous influence on the general course of human events. I can only say, Sir—I feel it my duty to say—that during the period, however brief, in which we occupied a responsible position as regards the administration of this country, we found a cordial understanding with France to be of great advantage to the welfare of the world; that on several occasions we found that cordial understanding coming to our aid to maintain peace, to advance civilisation, and to promote the general welfare of mankind. I do not wish to take refuge in vague declamation; but of course upon such a subject I am bound to exercise considerable reserve. I shall not now pretend to give to the House a catalogue of all the instances in which we found the advantage of that cordial

understanding and sincere co-operation on the part of France, but I noted down last night some instances which I think I am justified in stating to the House, and I shall place them before you with the conviction that, when unbiassed and unprejudiced persons consider the transactions to which they refer and the brief interval in which all these transactions—which are only a part of the transactions which did occur—took place, they will see the importance of the considerations that I am endeavouring now to impress upon them.

Let me, then, mention some instances, to which I can without impropriety allude, in which during the time that we occupied office we found the advantage of having a cordial understanding with our neighbours. There was a misunderstanding between France and Switzerland on a subject which disquieted Europe, and which many supposed at one moment might greatly disturb the peaceful relations of the world. Our advice was accepted in that case. Our good offices were tendered and accepted, and that cloud was completely dispelled. Take another case—the case in which France joined with us in the negotiation for the opening of the South American rivers. That was an operation tending to increase the commercial relations of the world, and to advance that cause of progress which all are so anxious to foster. Then there was the case of Prussia and Neuchâtel, when a violent course might have been anticipated on the part of Prussia against Neuchâtel, but the united representations of France and England, made in the most friendly spirit to the enlightened monarch who governs Prussia, led to the happy termination of that affair. A fourth instance is one in which France joined with us in pressing upon the United States the tripartite renunciation of Cuba. It is true we did not succeed in the immediate object of that interference; but the moral effect of the step has been very considerable, and at least indicated a total absence on the part of France of that anxiety to keep alive subjects and opportunities of public embroilment which has been so liberally imputed to her. We succeeded also, in cordial union with France, in preventing the war which was about to break out in Haiti.

But I will take another case, because it is greatly to the

honour and reputation of France—I am not forgetting, I assure the House, a proper reserve in alluding to these subjects. I will take the case when the peaceful relations of the Levant were threatened last year, with regard to the *tanzimat* in Egypt, which was instituted last year by the Sultan of Turkey. We had entirely failed diplomatically in inducing the Sultan to modify that *tanzimat*. Now, although it has always been the traditional policy of France to encourage the independent conduct of the Pacha of Egypt, and not to be too apt to aid in terminating disputes between the Prince and the Porte, yet when affairs assumed an aspect which seemed to threaten a disturbance in the Levant, we appealed to the cordial feeling of France; she joined with us, and by our united influence, the *tanzimat* was modified, and the question in dispute was amicably arranged. I might state another instance. I might appeal to the conduct of France in reference to the revision of the Greek Succession Treaty, which secured to the Greeks the fulfilment of their constitutional law. I might also appeal to the conduct of France and to her cordial co-operation with England, though against some of her apparent interests, in preventing the disturbances which threatened the new Regency of Tunis.

I have stated eight instances in which the cordial union of France assisted us in preventing great evils, not only to this country, but to the world generally; but remember that during all this time, while all this was taking place, much to the credit of the noble lord who then presided over the Foreign Office (the Earl of Malmesbury), and who has had such scanty justice done him, but to whose indefatigable application and determined energy this country is much indebted—remember that all this time, while the French Government were quietly, tranquilly, and diplomatically working with our Government for these great objects of public benefit and advantage—that French Government was painted as corsairs and banditti, watching to attack our coasts without the slightest provocation and without the slightest warning. Well then, I have shown that the cordial understanding between England and France was the great principle, so far as our foreign policy was concerned,

of the Government of Lord Derby, but we shall always remember that the conduct of France, while we were in office, was conduct which entitled that nation to the respect, sympathy, and good feeling of the people of this country.

Now, Sir, in the portion of the speech of the noble lord opposite which I just read, the House perhaps noticed one of the fine observations which often distinguish the remarks of the noble lord. The noble lord pointed out to the House the advantage which the Emperor of the French has over his illustrious relative, in the fact that, instead of being ignorant of the laws and Constitution of this country, he, from long residence here, is familiar with our language, our habits, and our customs. No doubt, Sir, that is a most beneficial circumstance in the position of the present Emperor of the French—he has lived long in England, he has known English society in various classes, his education has not been deficient in the most important element, adversity, and it is not likely he would misconceive, however much he might be annoyed at, the character of the English Press. No doubt, the present Emperor of the French must have been perfectly aware that the attacks of the Press on him were attacks for which neither the Government nor the nation, as a nation, is responsible, and if he has—as I should suppose it is pretty well known that he has, both from official notification and other sources—expressed indignation and annoyance at these attacks, it must have been because he was of opinion that when they became known to his subjects at home, the latter might get from the circumstances so accurate an opinion as himself. It is, indeed, not likely, when those attacks are made on his country, his subjects, and himself, that those who read them abroad could comprehend—what few but Englishmen can comprehend—the exact relations between the readers and writers of public journals in this country. Therefore, I am not surprised he felt indignation and alarm at these attacks, though I agree with the noble lord that a person who had resided so long in England as the present Emperor of France could not for a moment misconceive the audacity of the statements in question.

Bearing that in mind, I ask the House to permit me to

pursue my inquiry, and ask what is the feeling of the present Government, of which the noble lord the member for the City of London is a member, on the subject of the relations between France and England? We know well what were the feelings of the Government of the noble lord on this subject when the noble lord was at the head of the administration, and we also know well, both from the statement I have made and from the reference to past transactions which I have offered to the House, what were the feelings of Lord Derby and his colleagues on this important matter.

But I now wish to ascertain—for after all, that is the most important question—what upon this subject are the views, opinions, and sentiments of the Government of my Lord Aberdeen? Sir, soon after the formation of that Government, a declaration of opinion on this subject was made by one of its most eminent members, the First Lord of the Admiralty.¹ The First Lord of the Admiralty, a most experienced statesman, found himself, by his acceptance of office, and by a return to those councils he had previously adorned, in one of the most responsible positions in which an English minister at the formation of a Government can find himself—upon the hustings, before his constituents, in the face of the whole country, with the people watching for the expression of his opinions, in order that they might form some idea of the policy of the new Government, and, I may say, with the whole of Europe, not less anxious as to the result, listening to him. What, then, was the statement of the right honourable gentleman with respect to the state of affairs in France? The right honourable gentleman described the ruler of France, and he also described those whom he ruled, in one of those pithy sentences which no one prepares, with more due elaboration. In the same sentence the right honourable gentleman contrived to give the character not only of the Emperor of the French, but of the French themselves. He described the Emperor of the French as a despot who had trampled on the rights and liberties of forty millions of men. (Loud cheers.) Nothing demonstrates the evil of making such declarations more than hearing them cheered in the manner the House has just wit-

¹ Sir J. Graham.

nessed Well, according to the right honourable gentleman, one of the most distinguished members of the cabinet of Lord Aberdeen—which cabinet, we hoped, was to maintain that cordial understanding with France which was the cardinal point of the policy of the Government of the noble lord opposite and of the Government of Lord Derby—the present ruler of France is a despot who has trampled on the rights and liberties of forty millions of human beings. Therefore, the French people, according to the right honourable gentleman, are a nation of slaves; and a despot and slaves are those with whom we are to have a cordial understanding, in order to prevent those dangers and to secure those blessings which, by a reference to those proceedings which I have already detailed, are the consequences of having a cordial understanding with France.

Well, if I had to form an opinion of the policy of the cabinet from the first declaration made by so eminent a member of it as the First Lord of the Admiralty, I should certainly be induced to suppose that some great change was about to occur. How are we to account for such a declaration? I will not be so impertinent as to suppose it was an indiscretion. An indiscretion from 'All the Talents'?—impossible! Can it, then, be design? I will not misrepresent the right honourable gentleman; I will not commit the mistake I made the other day. I understand from what the noble lord opposite then stated that you may call the French slaves if you are speaking illustratively of politics in general, but you must not call the Emperor of the French a tyrant, or his subjects slaves, if you are formally treating of the foreign relations of the country. Now, I frankly admit that the right honourable gentleman was not treating of the foreign relations of the country, he was only offering arguments against extended suffrage and vote by ballot—arguments, by the way, which I trust have had a due influence on the mind of the President of the Board of Works (Sir William Moleworth). The right honourable gentleman made some significant observations on the subject. I do not allude to his promise of obtaining a large measure of Parliamentary Reform, because on the hustings there must be allowed some licence on such subjects, though there can be no doubt that whatever liberties you

may take with your constituents, a councillor of Her Majesty ought at least to be careful when he speaks of a foreign potentate.

I must therefore assume, until in the pursuit of my investigation I can arrive at a different conclusion—I must assume for the moment that this was a declaration made without design. The present Government tell us that they have no principles—at least, not at present. Some people are uncharitable enough to suppose that they have not got a party; but, in Heaven's name, why are they ministers if they have not got discretion? That is the great quality on which I had thought this cabinet was established. Vast experience, administrative adroitness—safe men, who never would blunder—men who might not only take the Government without a principle and without a party, but to whom the country ought to be grateful for taking it under such circumstances; yet, at the very first outset, we find one of the most experienced of these eminent statesmen acting in the teeth of the declarations of the noble lord opposite, and of Lord Grey, made in 1852; and holding up to public scorn and indignation the ruler and the people a good and cordial understanding with whom is one of the cardinal points of all sound statesmanship.

Well, Sir, another minister has also given his opinion on the politics of France. Parliament had not resumed its sittings before two of these experienced men had expressed publicly sentiments which startled the country, which alarmed Europe, and which were apologised for, in one instance, by the noble lord opposite. I am not going now to say a single word on the observations of the President of the Board of Control (Sir Charles Wood) as regards their offensive character to the Emperor of the French. The right honourable gentleman has explained in a letter that he may have said unpremeditatedly that the Emperor of the French 'gagged the Press of France, that he gagged the Press of Brussels, and that he hates our Press because it speaks the truth, and he cannot gag it,' but still he did not mean to say anything at all offensive to the Emperor. I know the right honourable gentleman is in the habit of saying very offensive things without meaning it.

know he has outraged the feelings of many individuals without the slightest intention of doing so, and therefore, in reference to so peculiar an organisation, I can only say that that is a very awkward accomplishment. But this speech at Halifax, in which the discreet President of the Board of Control followed the experienced First Lord of the Admiralty with a wonderful harmony of conduct and sympathy of sentiment, contained far more important allegations than the personal words to which the letter of the right honourable the President of the Board of Control referred the other day.

What does the right honourable gentleman mean by the Press of Belgium being gagged? I do not know whether right honourable gentlemen opposite are aware of the position of Belgium, whether they know that it is an independent country, governed by one whom I may fairly describe as the wisest and most accomplished of living princes. What a description is given of the position of the King of the Belgians, to say nothing of the Belgian people, when a minister of Queen Victoria publicly announces to Europe that the King of the Belgians is in a state more humiliating than the slaves who, according to the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, are the subjects of the Emperor of the French, and that he permits the Press of his country to be gagged by a foreign Power? Now, what are the facts? Is the Press of Belgium gagged? Is the prince in whom England must always take an interest irrespective of his great talents and accomplishments—is he in the humiliating position of having his Press gagged? Let us look into the facts of this important case, and let us see whether they have been correctly stated by the President of the Board of Control, who, from his position, ought to be acquainted with some of them. Belgium is a country the independence and neutrality of which are guaranteed by treaties to which England is a party, and that independence and neutrality are not to be impeached or violated without England interfering with other Powers to vindicate the rights and establish the authority of that country. There is no slight question at stake in this matter, because, if the Press of Belgium be gagged by a foreign Power, where is the independence of that country?

And where and at what hour may not England be called on, in conformity with treaties which cannot be evaded, to emancipate Belgium from this thralldom. I recommend honourable gentlemen to take that point into consideration, in consequence of the statement made on the high authority of a gentleman fresh from cabinet councils, who must therefore be supposed to have a complete and accurate idea of the state of Europe.

There was this difference between the Press of England and that of Belgium in reference to French affairs, that the newspapers published in Belgium against the Emperor of the French were printed in the language of his countrymen, and that they openly incited to and recommended the assassination of the ruler of France. Of course, under these circumstances, it is not remarkable that the ruler of France complained of such flagrant outrages. It is impossible to say, if no redress had been given or offered, what might not have been the consequences. It is very possible that Belgium might have become involved in invasion because no protection against such outrages towards a neighbouring sovereign could be given. It is also very possible that the Great Powers might not have conceived it to be their duty, under the circumstances, to assist in the rescue of that country. But see the embroilment of Europe that might then have arisen. Perhaps England alone would have been left as the champion of Belgium, because it is not likely that we should have deserted our neighbours, whose independence we are bound to maintain.

What, then, did the King of the Belgians do? He acted like a wise and able sovereign. He did not submit to his Press being gagged; he made no humiliating concessions; but he felt that the appeal made to him was a just appeal, that the outrage was an unjustifiable outrage; and he went to his own free Parliament, and said that it was an intolerable grievance that a neighbouring prince should be held up to assassination by newspapers in Belgium, and in the language read by his own subjects; and he appealed to the Parliament to do what was proper. And what was the course of the free Parliament of Belgium? I believe, without a dissentient voice, certainly without any important opposition, they passed a law declaring

that papers in the French language, or in any language, should not be published in Belgium that recommended the assassination of neighbouring Princes; and thus in the most efficient and the most constitutional manner, that consummate sovereign terminated a difficulty which threatened his country, in a way most honourable to all parties. And yet it was not a newspaper, it was not one of those vile prints that counsel assassination, that made the statement that the Press of Belgium is gagged, but a councillor of Queen Victoria, an experienced statesman, a statesman selected to sit in the councils of the Government (where there is no regard to the principles of the gentlemen who compose it, as that is a question of second-rate importance)—selected to take office on account of his admirable discretion, his unfailing judgment, and the certainty that under no circumstances he would do or say anything that could commit his colleagues.

I observe that on the day when the right honourable gentleman made his speech at Halifax, the cabinet met and sat four hours. Now, when a cabinet sits four hours, the subjects considered must be weighty. The right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer smiles, as if the cabinet was sitting on the income-tax. Oh, no! I am sure the cabinet could not have been sitting on the income-tax. It is fully avowed and frankly acknowledged that all questions of domestic interest are to be suspended—adjourned to the Greek Kalends, for aught we know—and therefore it is clear it could not have been about any question of domestic policy the Queen's servants met that day and sat so long. It is not, therefore, too rash a supposition to imagine that something connected with the foreign relations of the country may have occupied their thoughts. It is not difficult even—this, of course, is only a conjecture—to conceive the subject which attracted their attention; for the newspapers were teeming with accounts of the arrival of Government messengers with despatches from the Turkish empire, a portion of which was at the time disturbed. That problem which has perplexed the minds and occupied the anxious thoughts of statesmen for more than half a century—the state of the Turkish empire—was probably the

subject under the consideration of Her Majesty's ministers. Everyone knows how much is at stake in the solution of that problem. It is a question, not only of the peace of Europe, but of the civilisation of the world. And how have English statesmen hitherto dealt with it? In what manner have they attempted to grapple with the difficulties of this ever-reverting subject of perplexity and peril? Only in one way. They have recognised but one means by which a temperate, wise, and successful issue could be insured. And what is that? A cordial understanding with France. The traditionary policy of that great empire has led it always to feel that it must not sacrifice a high principle of State for any temporary success, or any petty and partial acquisition which it might be able to secure. So long as France and England thoroughly understand each other on this great question, the peace of the world and the interests of civilisation and humanity are not in peril.

I will assume, then, the Turkish question to have been the subject of the cabinet council of four hours, and I cannot well conceive any subject more worthy of such prolonged deliberation. I can conceive Her Majesty's ministers quitting the council chamber deep in thought and fully impressed with the almost awful responsibility of their decision upon that policy; and I can also conceive the feelings of these same ministers when next morning they read the speech at Halifax, and found that their absent colleague had designated in terms of ignominy the sovereign Power with whom they were to act as an ally, and treated—as I will presently show—the nation he rules over as the lowest, in point of civilisation, that can well be conceived.

As regards the First Lord of the Admiralty (Sir James Graham), he has had a great deal of experience, to be sure, but then he has been a long time in Opposition, and something might be said for him in the way of excuse on that account, if, indeed, so great a personage can condescend to an excuse. The right honourable baronet might say, or somebody might say for him, 'Well, I have been a good many years without attending cabinet councils. This occurred before any new cabinet councils were summoned. I was unexpectedly called

to power—without any previous arrangements or understanding, of course I had not yet attended the councils of Her Majesty's servants when I went to the hustings. It is a strange thing that I should have made such a business of it, but still these things will happen.'

But what was the position of the President of the Board of Control? He was hardly out of office but he was in again. He had been in office five or six years, and a hardish time he had of it, no doubt, but nevertheless he agreed again to lend his gravity to the councils of his Royal Mistress. He was so properly anxious that the people of this country should have none but discreet men to administer their affairs that, without making any stipulations as to the policy or principles of the Government, he became a minister again, and attended twenty cabinet councils before he went down to make the Halifax demonstration, and yet, with this renovated sense of responsibility—knowing how much depended upon everything said by a minister under these circumstances—the right honourable gentleman, fresh from cabinet councils, knowing all the questions at issue, goes to his constituents, describes the ruler of the French in language I have more than once referred to, and will not now repeat, and then proceeds, in a passage which I have not yet read to the House, to give the people of Halifax some idea of the conduct of the Emperor's subjects. The right honourable gentleman feels it necessary to vindicate the increased expenditure of the country to his constituents, and he shows them, as it was not difficult to do, that this expenditure had been incurred solely for self-defence. But then the right honourable gentleman goes on to illustrate the importance of these defensive measures, 'For,' says he, 'I do not think there will be a regular war with the French, but I tell you what you will have—you will have bodies of 5,000 men suddenly thrown upon your coast, and how would you like that? How would your wives and daughters be treated?' This is a description of the bravest, the most polished, and most ingenious nation of Christendom by one of Her Majesty's ministers.

Now, I shall not express my own opinion of this definition

or description of the French nation by the President of the Board of Control; but I will quote the words of a great Whig minister, whose memory must be respected by every gentleman on the opposite bench—I was going to say by every member of the Government, but that, perhaps, would be going too far. In the debate which took place in the House of Lords on Mr. Pitt's commercial treaty with France in 1787, Lord Stormont, I think it was, opposing the treaty, put forward as one of his arguments that it would be dangerous for British merchants to invest so much money in France, because in the case of a war the French Government would seize upon all their capital; whereupon Lord Shelburne—who now bore the honoured name of Lansdowne—ridiculed such sentiments, saying, 'One would suppose in listening to the noble lord, that he imagines the French nation to be corsairs and banditti of Tunis and Morocco.' Well, that is what I say to the President of the Board of Control. The Halifax hypothesis is, that without declaring war, and in utter violation of all the rules which govern civilised nations, the French will land bands of men on our coast, to commit the desecrating enormities hinted at; and I say that the man who conceives this to be possible must imagine the bravest, the most ingenious, and the most polished people in the world to be no better than corsairs of Tunis and Morocco; and yet, after having said all these things, the right honourable gentleman writes a letter to the leader of the House of Commons¹—mind, I am not touching on his apology to the ruler of France; I have omitted all that from consideration to-night: I do not think much of the apology; I can't say I think it a handsome one—but let that pass; I am looking to the principles involved, and the great interests at stake in the speeches and statements of a cabinet minister. In this letter the right honourable gentleman says, quite in his own vein, 'I cannot conceive that an English minister is to be precluded from adverting to what he conceives to be the state of things on the Continent.' Well, I will match that sentence for style against any sentence that was ever written; it is, indeed, worthy of the position which the right honourable

¹ Lord John Russell.

gentleman occupied. He is apologising to an Emperor for an insult to a nation, and then he tells us that he is not conscious that an English minister should be precluded from adverting to what he conceives to be the state of things on the Continent.

My opinion is, that an English minister should not open his mouth on any subject, and certainly not upon what the President of the Board of Control calls 'the state of things on the Continent,' without a grave sense of responsibility. And, moreover, I think that if, under the circumstances, the President of the Board of Control thought it his duty to advert to what he supposed to be the state of things on the Continent, he ought, as a minister, to have been courteous in expression and conciliatory in language. But I cannot admit the principle that an English minister should take part in the most secret deliberations of the greatest kingdom of the world, and then leave the cabinet to babble on a hustings all that he has heard. What cabinet ministers understand to be the state of things on the Continent is a great secret of State. We have no right to ask them to divulge it in this House, much less in the Odd Fellows Hall at Halifax.

Well, I have advanced so far in this argument that we have arrived, so far as the sentiments of Her Majesty's ministers on the all important question of our relations with France are concerned, at a very unsatisfactory point. Though there might be no doubt as to the policy of the noble lord¹ opposite when he was chief minister—though there could be no doubt of the policy of Lord Derby when he was chief minister—as regards our relations with that country, hitherto, if we are to be guided by what has transpired in the speeches of two members of the cabinet, there is very grave doubt as to what the policy of the present cabinet of the Earl of Aberdeen is to be. I think that it is not only a legitimate subject of investigation and inquiry, but that it is our absolute duty to obtain from the present cabinet, if possible, something more satisfactory upon this all important subject. For be it observed that the Emperor of the French, with all his English experience, cannot for a moment look upon the declarations I have quoted as only the declarations of private

¹ Lord J. Russell

individuals. They are not anonymous or unauthorised declarations; and in his mind they may rightly be esteemed as national declarations, being expressions of opinion by members of Her Majesty's Government. They must be viewed, therefore, in a very different light to opinions expressed, and legitimately expressed, by the public journals of the country.

But there are additional and peculiar reasons why we should make this inquiry at the present time. When the present Government took office, the head of the Government offered what is called a programme of his policy in another place—a programme so vigorous and lucid in the opinion of the noble lord opposite, that he considered it quite exhausted the subject, that it left no topic untouched and no doubt upon any topic in the mind of any individual; and therefore the noble lord said that he would not presume to add anything. Now, there was a declaration in that programme upon the foreign policy of the Government. I beg to call the attention of the House to that very important declaration. Remember who made it; remember it was made, not only by the Prime Minister of England, but by one who had filled the highest offices of State, and especially had been more than once and for a considerable period Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Therefore, although a minister is bound to know something of everything, the House will observe that upon this topic the chief minister was bound to know everything. It is a subject of which he is pre-eminently master. Let us then recall to our recollection the statement in the satisfactory programme made by the Earl of Aberdeen. He said it was unnecessary to dilate upon the topic, because the system and the principles on which the foreign policy of this country had been conducted during the last thirty years had always been the same.

Sir, I confess I listened to that statement with surprise. I could not but recall to mind the tempestuous debates which only three years ago resounded in this House on the subject of our foreign policy.¹ I could not forget that the system and

¹ The reference is to the Debates on the affairs of Greece which took place in both Houses in the month of June 1850. In the Upper House the vote of censure, proposed by Lord Stanley, was carried by a majority of 37; in the

principles of the foreign policy then pursued, and which has been pursued for years by the Government presided over by the noble lord the member for London, had been described as unbecoming to the dignity of England and perilous to the peace of Europe. I could not but remember that this was the language used by one of his colleagues in this coalition ministry. I could not but recollect that Lord Aberdeen himself with reference to the then foreign policy and the principles on which it was conducted had used an epithet rarely admitted into Parliamentary debate, for he stigmatised them as 'abominable.' I could not but recollect also that the great indictment of the foreign policy of the then Government was opened in this House with elaborate care and vehement invective by the honourable baronet now First Lord of the Admiralty (Sir J. Graham). I therefore was somewhat surprised when I found that for thirty years there had been no difference in the principles on which the foreign policy of this country had been conducted. I could not but recollect, too, that the noble lord the member for London denounced the principal instigator¹ of those debates as one who did not take the foremost part in them which he ought to have done, and as being in league with foreign conspirators for the most disgraceful object which it was possible for a British statesman, if it could be proved, to pursue. I could not but remember the glowing and fervid eloquence with which the noble lord vindicated his noble friend the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and still a Secretary of State, when, commending him as a truly British minister, he said, 'He is not the minister of Austria, he is not the minister of Russia, he is not the minister of France, but the minister of England.'

Who, then, was the minister of Russia, Austria, and France? Who sat for that portrait? It is the portrait of the present Prime Minister of England² drawn by his leader of the House

Lower a vote of confidence proposed by Mr Roebuck was carried by a majority of 46. Lord Aberdeen in the one House and Sir J. Graham and Mr Gladstone in the other particularly distinguished themselves against the Government.

¹ It is not quite clear to whom these words are applied. From Lord J. Russell's remarks on June 20 it would appear to be Mr Disraeli himself.

² Lord Aberdeen.

of Commons, and he has paid the artist for his performance by degrading him from the post of which he was worthy. I hold in my hand an invitation to a meeting of the merchants, bankers, and traders of the city of London 'who feel called on at this time publicly to express their deep concern at witnessing the endeavours continually made to create and perpetuate feelings of distrust, ill-will and hostility between the inhabitants of the two great nations of France and England.' I therefore recommend some of the honourable members who attempt to disturb my observations to go to the London Tavern and tell the merchants, bankers and traders of England that they are exhibiting a factious feeling towards the Government because they feel alarmed and disquieted as to their commercial transactions. I will not be deterred from putting the question I am about to ask. I say we have a right to ask ministers upon what principle our foreign policy is to be conducted. Is their system to be one of 'liberal energy' or of 'antiquated imbecility'? When the noble viscount opposite (Lord Palmerston), who was then Foreign Secretary, was vindicating himself from attacks,¹ he took credit for the liberal energy of his policy, and described the principles recommended by his present chief as a system of 'antiquated imbecility.' Now, I think it of the utmost importance that we should clearly know whether the foreign policy of this country is to be carried on on principles of liberal energy or of antiquated imbecility. But, Sir, I have shown to the House that already two cabinet ministers have acted in a manner quite opposed to the declaration of 1852. I have shown that the programme of the First Minister does not in any way remove the difficulties with which we are surrounded, and that it is utterly inconsistent with the facts of the case according to a large number of the members of the present cabinet.

If the principles of our foreign policy have never changed, how can the Chancellor of the Exchequer² and the First Lord of the Admiralty vindicate the course which they formerly took, the resolutions which they then supported, and the sentiments

¹ *I.e.* in the Greek Debate. *Vide supra.*

² Mr. Gladstone.

they then expressed? I think they will find it a difficult task. I have no doubt the noble lord is perfectly convinced of the justice and truth of the sentiments he expressed in 1852. Anything that falls from his lips on such a subject—or, indeed, upon any subject—as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,¹ is entitled to the highest consideration. But, how long is he going to remain Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? I am not speaking now from mere rumour. I ask—and it is a legitimate question in a debate on our foreign policy—why did the noble lord take the important post he occupies? Was it because his opinions on the French connection were well known? Well, is he going to leave the post because his cabinet, or the majority of his cabinet, does not agree with those opinions? This is clearly a subject on which some explanation is due to the House.

I know I may be met, but I hardly think I shall be met, by the allegation that I have no right to suppose the noble lord is about to quit the office he is so competent to occupy. I said I do not speak from rumour on this point, and I will now state to the House the authority on which I said so. It is a paragraph in a paper—a journal. I hope, notwithstanding the conduct of the journals that have criticised some of us, it will not be undervalued on that account. It is, to borrow an expression from our neighbours, ‘a communication,’ and it appears in a journal of great respectability. It appears in large letters, in a prominent place, in a newspaper, and commences with the significant words, ‘We are authorised to state’—in fact, it is redolent of Downing Street, and no doubt comes from it. This first paragraph, for there have been four of them—informs us that the arrangements which were not quite made when the cabinet was formed are now pretty well settled. The noble lord the member for London is to continue leader of the House of Commons, but is to relinquish the office of Secretary of State, and he will probably not assume any other office. I have not the paragraph here, and it was only by chance I read them yesterday, but I can state pretty nearly the substance of them. That

¹ Lord J. Russell was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during the early part of the Coalition Government and was succeeded by Lord Clarendon.

was a very strange announcement no doubt, but then came the second paragraph. We understood from the first that the noble lord had accepted office as Secretary of State provisionally; but people were surprised at this, and then there came forth another paragraph, in which they 'were authorised to state' that this was a mistake, that the noble lord was not to hold office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but to have some office where there was nothing to do, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Waterloo Bridge. In fact, the only place the description met was that of the toll-gatherer.

Well, Sir, that paragraph was not satisfactory. The noble lord, whatever the opinions of some of us may be, is rather a favourite of the people of England, and they did not think that was exactly the treatment to which a man of his position was entitled. There was then another paragraph, in which it was stated 'on authority,' that all the other paragraphs were erroneous—that the noble lord was going to resign the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but was certainly to continue leader of the House, and was to have a room allowed him in the office of the Secretary of State. But the climax was reached when a fourth and rather an angry paragraph, written, it seemed, with some personal indignation at what had already been published, appeared, in which it was stated that nothing could be more erroneous or premature than the previous announcement that the noble lord was to continue leader of the House of Commons; that he was not to have a small room at the Foreign Office, but that he was to have a room at the Council Office, and even to be allowed two clerks.

Sir, I protest against this system of shutting up great men in small rooms, and of binding to the triumphal chariot wheels of administrative ability, all the force and genius of the Whig party. I think I have a right to ask the noble lord frankly, 'Are you Secretary of State, or are you not?' If he is Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he will no doubt, on the subject we are treating to-night, afford us very satisfactory information; but if he is Secretary of State now, but is not to be Secretary of State to-morrow, I think the declarations of the noble lord on a question of foreign policy will be much depreciated in the

value which we should otherwise attach to them. Sir, considering the conduct of the First Lord of the Admiralty—conduct which I will not describe, for to say that it was the result of design would be offensive, and to say that it was indiscreet would, as I observed before, be impertinent; considering the conduct of the President of the Board of Control, which, be it designed or indiscreet, or anything else, is of no matter, for no epithets can rescue him from the position he occupies; considering the programme of the First Minister, which contradicts all our previous experience and confounds all our convictions; considering the mysterious circumstances which attend the present occupation of the post of Secretary of State by the noble lord the member for London, I think I have a right to ask for what has not yet been accorded us—some clear explanation from the Government with respect to the relations which exist between this country and France.

Sir, there is one other reason why I am bound to pursue this inquiry at the present moment, and I find that reason in the present state of parties in this House. It is a peculiar state of things; it is quite unprecedented; it is well deserving of the attention of honourable members who sit in that quarter of the House [*the benches below the gangway on the ministerial side*]. We have at this moment a Conservative ministry and a Conservative Opposition. Where the great Liberal party is, I pretend not to know. Where are the Whigs with their great tradition—two centuries of Parliamentary lustre, and deeds of noble patriotism? There is no one to answer. Where are the youthful energies of Radicalism—its buoyant expectation—its sanguine hopes? Awakened, I fear, from the first dream of that ardent inexperience which finds itself at the same moment used and discarded—used without compunction, and not discarded with too much decency. Where are the Radicals? Is there a man in the House who declares himself to be a Radical? (A voice: 'Yes!') Oh, no! You would be afraid of being caught and changed into a Conservative minister. Well! how has this curious state of things been brought about? What is the machinery by which it has been effected—the secret system

that has brought on this portentous political calamity? I think I must go to that inexhaustible magazine of political device, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to explain the present state of affairs.

The House may recollect that some two years ago, when I had the honour of addressing them on a subject of some importance, that the right honourable gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty afforded us, as is his wont, one of those political creeds in which his speeches abound; and the right honourable gentleman on that occasion, in order that there might be no mistake—in order that the House and the country should be alike undeceived, and that they should not have any false expectations from him—especially the Conservative or Protectionist party—said, in a manner the most decided, that his political creed was this: ‘I take my stand upon Progress.’ Well, Sir, I thought at the time that progress was an odd thing to take one’s stand upon. I thought at the time that a statesman who took his stand upon progress might find he had got a very slippery foundation. I thought at the time, though the right honourable gentleman weighs his words, that this was a piece of rhetorical slip-slop. But I apologise for the momentary suspicion. I take the earliest opportunity of expressing to the right honourable gentleman my sincere regret that I had for a moment supposed he could make an inadvertent observation. I find that it was a system perfectly matured, and now brought into action, of which the right honourable gentleman spoke. For we have now got a ministry of ‘Progress,’ and everyone stands still. We never hear the word ‘Reform’ now: it is no longer a ministry of Reform; it is a ministry of Progress, every member of which agrees to do nothing. All difficult questions are suspended. All questions which cannot be agreed upon are open questions. Now, Sir, I don’t want to be unreasonable, but I think there ought to be some limit to this system of open questions. It is a system which has hitherto prevailed only partially in this country, and which never has prevailed with any advantage to it. Let us, at least, fix some limit to it. Let Parliamentary Reform, let

the Ballot, be open questions if you please; let every institution in Church and State be open questions; but, at least, let your answer to me to-night prove that, among your open questions, you are not going to make an open question of the peace of Europe.

PROSECUTION OF WAR, May 24, 1855.

[In March 1855 Lord John Russell had gone out as Plenipotentiary to the Vienna Conference; and while there had offered to recommend to his colleagues terms of peace proposed by Austria, which on his return home, finding that they did not approve of them, he forbore to press, and did not divulge to Parliament. Soon after his return he delivered a most warlike speech. But Mr. Disraeli believed that on his first return from Vienna these proposals were more favourably received by the cabinet than the public had been led to believe, and that at one moment 'a new coalition' was meditated, on the basis of them, which would have brought to the Government the support of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Milner Gibson and the Peace Party, without which it was liable to defeat at any moment. The Resolution therefore was intended to force the Government to declare itself. On a division being taken the motion was negatived by 319 votes to 219.]

MR. DISRAELI rose, according to notice, to move the following resolution:—

‘That this House cannot adjourn for the recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty’s Government in reference to the great question of peace or war; and that, under these circumstances, this House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace.’

He said: In rising, Sir, to move the resolution which is now in your hands I wish in the first place to explain to the House the reasons by which I am actuated in so doing, and the object which I have in view. Sir, I have watched for some time, as I suppose every member in this House has watched, with interest and with deep anxiety, the conduct of the Government with

respect to the great question of peace or war during the recent Conference at Vienna; and I have imbibed an opinion with respect to the intentions of the Government which has filled me with distrust. I thought that there was on their part language so ambiguous and conduct so uncertain that I was led to reflect what might be the consequences of circumstances which undoubtedly had filled the public mind of this country with great disquietude and great discontent, and which certainly demanded the attention and consideration of every man who felt that he had a responsible duty to perform in this House. It was impossible for me, entertaining that opinion, to ask that the sentiments of this House should be publicly declared on this subject so long as negotiations were going on. Everybody knows that the obvious and irresistible answer to me would have been, 'Her Majesty's servants are at this moment engaged in confidential communication with the representatives of foreign Powers, and it would be highly indecorous and might be injurious to the interests of Her Majesty's service if the criticisms of Parliament should interfere with the probable result of their labours.' Who can for a moment deny that such an objection would be entirely judicious and could not for a moment be resisted? At last, Sir, after some inquiry and after an unusual period of time, the protocols of the negotiations were laid on the table of this House, and I did anticipate that the minister, following the precedents which as I think ought to have regulated his conduct, would have taken the earliest opportunity of asking the opinion of Parliament upon the labours *of the representative of his Government, and would have also taken the same opportunity of laying before the House of Commons—without of course committing himself to embarrassing details, but still frankly, precisely, and explicitly—what were the intentions of the Government with regard to the great question of peace or war.*

Well, Sir, I more than once invited the First Minister to take that course, and I confess that even to the last I did believe that he would have reconsidered his first conclusion, and that he would have felt that he was doing his duty more satisfactorily to his sovereign, to Parliament, and to the country

if he had pursued the course which I had intimated. I did hope that the noble lord would have perceived that the public mind was in that state as certainly to render it necessary above all things that the minister should relieve and enlighten public opinion on subjects of such surpassing magnitude, and that he would therefore have been anxious to ask, in the constitutional and customary manner, the opinion of Parliament on the course and character of the negotiation which he had sanctioned, and the policy which he had intended to pursue.

Well, Sir, I was disappointed in that expectation, but I was not the only person who was disappointed; indeed, I think I may venture to say that the House and the country were equally disappointed; I think I may venture to say that it would have been satisfactory to the public in the present perplexed and somewhat sullen disposition of the nation, if, at the conclusion of negotiations which had been carried on upon our part with no usual pomp and ostentation, and which had therefore been looked to with proportionate interest—I think it would have been satisfactory to the people of England if the First Minister of the Crown had come forward when these negotiations had failed, and taken that opportunity of fairly expressing the views of his administration to Parliament, and have given, as I should have hoped, an expression of opinion which would have sustained and reanimated the spirit of the country. Nothing of this kind, however, occurred; and after some lapse of time I hesitated whether I should myself take the necessary step, and ultimately shrank from doing what I felt to be my duty, from what I admit may be a cowardly fear of those vulgar imputations which are often too influential—imputations that a man, when compelled in the exercise of his duty in this House to do that which may in some degree convey a censure of the Government, is actuated by the most unworthy motives. I declined, I am ashamed to say, and more than once declined, to take the course that, in the position which with the too great indulgence of my friends, I occupy, I felt was my duty.

However, a right honourable gentleman, a member for a great city, a member of the Privy Council of the Queen, thought

that this was an occasion which could not be allowed to pass unnoticed, and therefore he placed on the table of the House a motion for an Address to Her Majesty. The right honourable gentleman the member for Manchester (Mr. Gibson), instead of the First Minister of the Crown, proposed an Address to Her Majesty upon the grave question of peace or war. I hope, if the noble lord could have screwed up his courage to propose an Address to his Royal Mistress, that it would not have been conceived in the spirit of the motion of the right honourable member for Manchester; and the great object which I have in view to-night is, if I possibly can, to extract among other things from the Government a declaration to that effect.

But, Sir, the right honourable gentleman the member for Manchester, in giving his notice, acted in a perfectly Parliamentary manner, in a manner quite consistent with his own high character and eminent talents; and I heard of that notice with entire satisfaction, because I felt that the question would have been fairly brought before this House, that we should have had an opportunity of venturing at length into the discussion of topics which I am myself soon to treat upon—topics which I believe to be of the utmost importance to the honour and to the interests of this country. And, although I could not support that right honourable gentleman in this motion, I was grateful to him for affording to me and my friends the opportunity of expressing our views upon this subject, and for taking a course which would have elicited that expression of opinion which I believe now to be absolutely necessary for the country.

Sir, I never for a moment supposed that that discussion would not take place. Is there a gentleman on either side of the House who could for an instant have imagined that it could be suppressed? Not the slightest objection was made on the part of the Government when the right honourable gentleman's notice was given. True it is that the member for Manchester had not the power of commanding a day, in order to bring the question before the House; but then the unquestionable magnitude and gravity of the subject to be brought under consideration, the anxious feeling of the people of this country in regard

to it, and the sense of propriety which I suppose still influences a Queen's minister who is the leader of the House of Commons, convinced everyone immediately that no privileges of place, no arrangements of public business, could for a moment be obstacles to appointing a day when that discussion should be fairly and fully conducted. Accordingly, the noble lord, with that impulse which we could only expect on his part, gave at once an opportunity for facilitating the discussion, offering to the right honourable gentleman a day; and at last we had an Address to the Crown, to be moved by a Privy Councillor, which raised the whole question of peace or war. The day is appointed by the minister; Parliament is assembled; the House is more than usually full; the entire attention of the nation is fixed upon the House of Commons, believing that at length, after a dreary interval of inglorious lassitude, this assembly was about to give some signs of political life and Parliamentary duty; when to our great surprise, however—to the surprise, I should think, of everyone who was not in the secret, for the secret was well kept—the expectation of Parliament, of the country—I might almost say, of Europe—was baulked, and no possible chance whatever given for any discussion taking place upon the most momentous transactions that have occurred in this country since the peace of 1815, and which, strange to say, have, not only most deeply engrossed the interest, but absorbed the thoughts and passions of the people of England.

Sir, I need not recall to the recollection of the House what happened here on Monday last. The scene then enacted was too vivid and dramatic to be easily forgotten. A right honourable gentleman suddenly rose,¹ recently the colleague and, I suppose, still the friend of the noble lord, and, whether actuated merely by political considerations or by mere social influence, as some suppose, that right honourable gentleman, referring to some papers which have been long lying on the table of this House, and which all of us have studied, turns to a well-thumbed passage and asks the First Minister of the Crown whether, as there slightly intimated, it be a fact that there is a possibility of renewed negotiations taking place. I will do the noble lord

¹ Mr. Sidney Herbert.

the justice to say that he showed uncompromising courage on that occasion, for he did not condescend to assign the slightest ground for our believing anything of the kind. But nothing seemed to satisfy the appetite for suppression which characterised the principal conspirators on that occasion. Although the noble lord did not give the House or the right honourable querist the slightest ground for fearing that the discussion in this House would interfere with any negotiations whatever, another noble lord¹—perhaps also influenced by social feelings which we all respect—rose and, with a *naïveté* and a simplicity that all must have admired, first afforded the House the unnecessary information that he had engaged to second the motion of the member for Manchester, and in the next place said that really, after what had fallen from the member for the University of Oxford²—not, of course, after the answer of the noble lord—he thought it would be totally impossible for him to fulfil his promise.

Well, Sir, in a very short time it was found that we were to have no debate on the great question of peace or war before the Whitsuntide holiday, which were then impending, and, still influenced, Sir, by the convictions which I entertain on this subject, believing that the conduct of Her Majesty's ministers with respect to this question deserves the utmost suspicion and distrust, and, if not vigilantly watched and carefully controlled, may lead to consequences most perilous to the honour and the interests of this country, I felt it my duty to give that notice which I shall now, Sir, soon place in your hands. That is the simple reason for that notice. It is a notice limited to the issue which is attempted to be raised by the resolution. If the motion be one that involves a question of confidence or of censure upon the Government, let it not be said that it has been hastily prepared, or that sufficient notice has not been afforded to honourable member. The motion, on my part, has arisen from circumstances of the hour. The gentlemen who sit opposite have had the same notice of it as my own friends, and

¹ Lord Harry Vane

² Mr. Chalmers spoke after Lord Palmerston's answer to Mr. Sidney Herbert and appealed to Mr. Gibson to withdraw his motion.

I should be ashamed to attempt on such a subject to take a minister by surprise. In fact, if the House will permit me to say it, having no confidence in the Government, and feeling that it would not be improper to ask the opinion of the House on that general question, nevertheless the time alone would deter me from giving a notice of so comprehensive a character, because I could not, in taking such a course, have given that ample and sufficient notice to every member of this House which under such circumstances is usual. The present motion has grown out of the peculiar circumstances which I have described. It is a loyal and a legitimate motion; it takes nobody by surprise, and honourable gentlemen opposite were aware of its purpose almost as soon as those with whom I have the honour of acting.

Now, Sir, having stated my reasons for giving this notice, I will now venture to attempt to express what I purpose by it. I propose to-night, if possible, to induce the House to come to the same conclusion to which I have come myself. I think the conduct of Her Majesty's Government with respect to the question of peace or war has been uncertain, and their language ambiguous, and if the House be of my opinion, I hope the House will join with me in arresting the course of a policy which they must feel in this case to be injurious to the country. I purpose, if possible, to induce them to come to that conclusion. I ask something else: I ask the House, when uncertainty is so prevalent, when ambiguity of phrase and conduct is so rife, that they will, in a manner which cannot be mistaken, declare to the country that with regard to this war their opinions have not changed, and that their spirit is not daunted, and that while they disapprove the language and conduct of the Government, and are resolved if they possibly can by the vote of to-night to destroy what is the cause of this ambiguous language and uncertain conduct, they are at the same time ready to carry on this war until its great object—a secure and honourable peace—be obtained. With those views I shall to-night on this question attempt to obtain a clear and precise opinion from the House of Commons, and also if possible, though with less hope, from Her Majesty's ministers.

Now, Sir, having made these observations with the indulgence of the House, on the course and object of this proposition, let me, before I enter into a severer research advert to an observation made by the noble lord the other night¹ upon the manner in which I gave this notice. The noble lord made a good-humoured *tu quoque*—and a *tu quoque* should always be good humoured, for it has nothing else to recommend it—and he intimated to the House, with no great refinement of expression² that there was some concert between me and the honourable member for Aylesbury (Mr Layard) in bringing forward this motion, because the honourable gentleman relinquished his right to bring forward his motion, to which he could prefer a superior claim to mine. I beg to say that I had no communication with the honourable member on this subject. I cannot say that if I had met the honourable gentleman in the lobby, I should have refrained from having any communication with him. He has very often postponed the motion of which he has given notice, and had I met him I might naturally have said, ‘I am going to give my notice. do you really intend to bring forward your motion?’ But, as it happened, I did not meet him. I state this because I do not want anybody to consider that I see any impropriety in my communicating with the honourable member for Aylesbury or anyone else. As long as I am a member of this House I hope to maintain that frank communication with every member of Parliament which I trust has always distinguished my conduct. So far as the honourable gentleman is concerned, I have known him from childhood, and have always had great confidence in his ability and character. his abilities are now European in fame and have justified my opinion of them; and whatever the unfortunate circumstances³ which have prejudiced many against him in this House—which I deplore, and which, so far as he is concerned, I disapprove—still I have no doubt that the time will come when, with his talents and excellent disposition, he will outlive those prejudices,

¹ May 2^o

² A scene is being enacted which does great credit to all the actors concerned in it.

³ Mr Layard was at this time one of the leaders of the Administrative Reform League.

which I think, and I tell him so frankly, have some fair foundation. The honourable gentleman and the House will not, I am sure, misunderstand my observations. I should not have stated this unless I had just been informed—I hope I am wrong, but I am afraid the rumour is authentic—that the honourable gentleman intends to vote against my motion. I do not believe, however, that he or anyone else will vote against it until they have heard the debate about to ensue. I think the debate is a little too grave and important for leaders on either side of the House to count noses with accuracy. We are going to-night to discuss no common subject; we are going to weigh, scrutinise and examine the conduct of high personages intrusted with most solemn duties and upon whose conduct of these duties depends the greatness of this country and the happiness and prosperity of its people. He would not be a bold man only—he would be a shameless man—who could dare to say before this discussion that his name was registered in the pocket-book of any party.

Sir, the circumstances to which I am about to call the attention of the House will require no great exercise of memory to command. I am not going to ask them to go back to the passage of the Pruth, or to the declaration of war; my criticism to-night will be on public transactions of recent date, though I admit that without a previous knowledge of the circumstances that preceded them it would be more difficult to form an accurate and sober judgment on the subject. My canvas is so small that I shall commence with the installation in office of the First Minister opposite.¹ Glorious epoch for this country! One cannot but remember the triumphant cheers which announced that the crown of Parliamentary laurel encircled that reverend brow. There was a minister at last who would vindicate the honour of the country; there was a minister at last who would carry on the war like Chatham, and who would maintain his principles in this House like Pitt; there was a man, backed by an enthusiastic people to redeem a falling State! I remember on that occasion, when the first fervour was a little past—when men began to cease, as it were, to feel, and

¹ Lord Palmerston.

to commence to think—that a member of the House rose in his place and asked a significant interrogatory. I am sure the House may anticipate the sagacious mind that would forestall the fast-dissipating enthusiasm. The member for Carlisle¹ it was who rose and asked that question. The right honourable gentleman had, in a moment of thoughtlessness, forgotten to leave the cabinet when Lord Aberdeen retired, but it was a moment of amiable weakness, which we are probably all subject to, and which all of us, especially those in office, can easily pardon. When the right honourable gentleman took his seat below the gangway, and scanned the scene, and threw his sagacious eye over the various, yet memorable, history of those thirty-seven years to which he appealed a few nights ago, the right honourable gentleman then remembered that a few years back—a very few years back—he had, assisted by the eminent lieutenants who are also sitting near him, impeached the First Minister of the Crown, on account of his conduct of our foreign affairs. The noble lord the First Minister, if not then a traitor, was at least a ‘firebrand.’ I well recall that memorable Parliamentary contest which ended in a triumph for the noble lord—a triumph, I am bound to say, not gained so much by the valour and number of his legions as by his own distinguished prowess. The right honourable gentleman the member for Carlisle, remembering all these things, remembering that his foreign policy was the weak point of the noble lord, remembering that on this score he had formerly failed in turning the noble lord out of the cabinet—a duty reserved for the noble lord opposite² (Lord John Russell)—rose in his place, and, in a House not very full nor very attentive, said (he having just left the cabinet, and his seat, although filled by a not unworthy successor, being still warm with his ample presence) that he wished to address an inquiry to the noble lord, with whose opinion he must, at that time, have been familiar, and asked whether—in the new Government of which he had been so recently a member—whether there was to be any change in the principles upon

¹ Sir James Graham

² In consequence of Lord Palmerston's unguarded communication to the French Ambassador relating to the *cory d'état*

which the foreign policy of the new administration was to be conducted; whether the policy recommended and followed by Lord Aberdeen was to be adopted; whether, above all things, there was to be any change in the terms and conditions which our plenipotentiary was to insist upon at the Conference of Vienna? The right honourable gentleman must, therefore, have had some suspicion upon the subject; but his suspicion was in a moment dispelled. The noble lord rose and said, 'On the contrary, our principles are the same; our policy is entirely identified with the policy of Lord Aberdeen; no difference has been dreamed of for a moment with regard to the conditions upon which peace is to be sought for at the Vienna Conference.' The right honourable gentleman said he heard the statement with perfect satisfaction, and should, under those circumstances, conscientiously refrain from even the appearance of factious opposition to Her Majesty's Government.

We started with that interlude. Strange to say, after a certain time the plenipotentiary, whose conduct we shall have hereafter to discuss, returns frustrated; a plenipotentiary who represented the policy of Lord Aberdeen returned bootless from the conference. The protocols in due time were laid upon the table, but the noble lord did not, as I have before said, fulfil his duty as Chief Minister of the Crown by moving an address to his sovereign. Another gentleman,¹ however, set him the example, and a motion is placed upon the table. That motion, if it meant anything, meant a disapprobation of the conduct of the plenipotentiary at the Conference. It meant that the conditions of peace he insisted upon were unreasonable, and that the terms which were proffered ought to have been accepted. If it meant anything there is no doubt that it meant that. It is derogatory to the high character of the member for Manchester to suppose that it meant anything else. But what do the right honourable gentleman and his two right honourable friends² do? They were understood to be the chief supporters of the motion of the right honourable member for Manchester.² They rose in their places and threw

¹ Mr. M. Gibson.

² Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert.

their shields over the coming conflict, but unless I am much mistaken—and I would not for a moment refer to the information unless it had been given me in this House apparently with high authority and without reserve—that cluster of eloquence, and of intellect which had seceded from the cabinet of the noble lord were prepared to throw the lustre of their eloquence to exercise their highest faculties, to make use of their finest rhetoric in the attempt to influence the opinion of the House in favour of the motion about to be brought forward.

What is the inference to be drawn from this? Why, that there was some change in the conditions on which peace was to be sought for, and that there was some uncertainty in the conduct for which the First Minister had given a pledge to the right honourable baronet, because, if the noble lord had acted upon the pledge he had given to the right honourable gentleman with regard to the instructions with which the plenipotentiary was to be provided, and if the plenipotentiary had ably and completely carried these instructions into effect, how could the right honourable gentleman and his friends justify to themselves their support of a motion which was to challenge the propriety of the noble lord's conduct, and to declare that the conditions of peace upon which Government had insisted ought not to have been urged? The inquiry was made by the right honourable baronet on February 23, 1855, and thus leads me back for a moment to the unsuccessful plenipotentiary, to the critical period when that noble individual was appointed to office, for upon that appointment, and upon the conduct of the noble lord at Vienna, much depends. The appointment of the plenipotentiary did not at the first blush appear to be a happy one. The noble lord the member for London is so distinguished that I find it difficult to fix upon any subject or upon any part of his life in which he has not rendered himself remarkable, but I know nothing by which the noble lord has been more distinguished than by his denunciation of the power and the ambition of Russia. It is to the noble lord that I think may be mainly attributed—and in his various career his patriotism may be sustained and rewarded

by the recollection—the passion of this great country for a decisive struggle with the colossal energies of the Russian empire. The noble lord, then occupying an eminent post—one more eminent, I am sorry to say, than that which he now occupies—addressed, as the leader of the House of Commons, not only fervid but inflammatory language to the Parliament and people of England, the object of which was to show that war with Russia was the duty of the country, and that it ought to be carried on in no hesitating spirit, but ought to be undertaken by us with a determination of realising considerable results. The noble lord then said:—

‘The British ministry and nation would be the most silly of mortals if they were to sign an insecure peace, which would leave it to the public enemy to bide his time until, by the dissensions of the other Powers; until, by the weakness of some of these Powers, he should find a better opportunity of accomplishing his design.’

If you cheer that you will cheer still more at what I am about to read. The noble lord said a little later:—

‘The power and ambition of Russia are dangerous to Europe’s independence, and incompatible with Europe’s future security; therefore, no insufficient, no insecure peace is to be made: and England cannot lay down arms until material guarantees are obtained, which reducing Russia’s power to proportions innocuous to the general liberty will afford perfect security for the future.’

That is a brave spirit. When the noble lord goes to war he knows what he is going to war about: he wants to reduce the proportions of the Russian empire; he wants material guarantees for peace. These are designs which some may think rash, but all must at least respect as great. I am obliged to refer to these circumstances in order to show the character and the antecedents of the noble lord who was appointed our plenipotentiary to obtain peace. It was a happy choice. The noble lord, having frightened the country—I should not say the country, for it was then ready for anything—but having frightened the diplomacy of Europe with those announcements that Her Majesty’s ministers were going to reduce the propor-

tions of the Russian empire, and were going to commence a war which was not to terminate until we obtained material guarantees for peace, naturally called up in the other House of Parliament another noble lord whom, although living, I think I may venture to call illustrious. Then it was that Lord Lyndhurst—no advocate of a craven policy—Lord Lyndhurst, who in a green old age has shown a manly vigour in vindicating the high character of his country; Lord Lyndhurst, who, although an orator and a patriot, is still a lawyer and a statesman, asked this question: he demanded an explanation as to the consistency of such statements as reducing the proportions of the Russian empire and taking material guarantees with the protocol of December 5, 1853, to which France and England were signatories, which stated—

‘The present war cannot in any case lead to territorial diminutions or modifications of the Russian empire’

What happened then? I would not refer to Lord Clarendon if he were not still Secretary of State, for I shall endeavour, as much as I can, not to touch upon the policy of the illustrious corpses of the Aberdeen administration. I will refer only to existing and responsible ministers, although it is not to be supposed that any man who is a Secretary of State now would do anything so mean and pitiful as to say that he was not responsible for the deeds of the defunct administration. Well, what did Lord Clarendon say? Lord Clarendon last year was indignant at the inquiry of Lord Lyndhurst. He said that the language quoted by the noble and learned lord might be the will of Austria and Prussia, but it was not the will of England and of France. This was toward the end of the session, and therefore, notwithstanding even the protocol signed by France and England, which declared that, whatever the result of the war might be, the territory of Russia might not be diminished in extent, the English Government, by the head of its diplomacy, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated in the highest House of Parliament that England would not be influenced or controlled by the protocol that they had signed.

Well, Sir, I have shown that the noble lord who was selected

for a plenipotentiary to obtain peace, was unquestionably an advocate of war—and of war on a great scale. It is of infinite importance, when we have to investigate the conduct of the noble lord in this emergency, that we should clearly comprehend what were the antecedents of the noble lord and his qualifications for the office which I think he rashly undertook. The House will remember that it is only forty-eight hours since the First Minister of the Crown said that, although these negotiations had been unsuccessful, they had been conducted with consummate ability. The noble lord (Viscount Palmerston) nods his head. I accept that ceremony as if the noble lord threw down his glove, and I call upon the House of Commons, without respect to party, to give a verdict with respect to the conduct of our plenipotentiary at Vienna. Do not let it be said that I am making comments upon the conduct of the noble lord because I am a member of a different political party, and that this is a party move. If I show that his conduct at those Conferences led to consequences prejudicial to the public weal, it is my duty to bring these things forward. It was not enough that the noble lord made the speech to which I have referred, but he, the plenipotentiary of peace, distinguished himself in this House by the high tone he assumed with regard to Russia, and the rulers of Russia; and, although then the First Minister of State in this House, he did not hesitate to denounce the conduct of the Emperor and his minister as false and fraudulent.

The noble lord did more. As the session advanced, as the noble lord's blood grew more warm, in a moment of excitement (it was in the month of July), the noble lord revealed the secret policy of the profound cabinet of which he was a member to the House of Commons, and we then obtained the authoritative information that war was to be carried on and peace obtained in no less a manner than by the conquest of provinces, and the destruction of that stronghold that threw its frowning shadows over the waters of the Black Sea. The noble lord made an explanation afterwards of the words he used; but, as has been well observed, 'Apologies only account for that which they do not alter.' When the noble lord thus announced the

invasion of the Crimea, and the destruction of Sebastopol, I, for one, said that I had listened to the statement with dismay. These were the qualifications of the plenipotentiary of peace, whose selection did so much credit to the judgment of the First Minister, who, called to power by the enthusiasm of the people, and determined to put the right man in the right place, sends a minister to negotiate peace who had proclaimed an internecine war.

But these were not all the qualifications of the noble lord. It was not enough that he had distinguished himself by addressing inflammatory harangues to the House of Commons. It was not enough that in a moment of outrageous and fatal indiscretion he revealed, as one might say, the coming disasters of his country. It was not enough that he had denounced the conduct of the Emperor of Russia and his ministers as false and fraudulent. The noble lord signalled himself by another exploit before he went to make peace for his country. The noble lord destroyed a cabinet. He tripped up the Prime Minister because he was not earnest enough in prosecuting the war. These were the antecedents, these the qualifications of the minister plenipotentiary to whom was consigned the fulfilment of the most important duties that have ever been delegated to a subject of the Crown since the great Congress of Vienna. This was the dove sent out to the troubled waters of Europe.

It has been said of the noble lord—I think, very unjustly—by a high, though anonymous authority, that the noble lord was not calculated for the post of plenipotentiary in the first place, because he was not an eminent diplomatist, and, secondly, because he did not take that leading position at this moment in this country which might have compensated for his want of diplomatic experience in the opinion of the Russian Court. That was, I think, unjust, because I shall show that the noble lord has had a great though not lengthened experience of diplomatic affairs. He was once at the head of the diplomatic body of his country, and in that capacity performed feats of no mean character, which greatly influenced subsequent events, and are at this moment influencing the fortunes of this country, and, although it is quite true that, having held this office, when

the noble lord was called upon by his sovereign to form a Government he could only find one gentleman to serve under him, and that gentleman the present First Minister, and though the noble lord, with his great position and with all his genius, which I admire, finds himself in this disagreeable predicament of twice filling a subordinate position in two administrations which are Whig administrations, still that noble lord is the leader of the great Whig party—that small company of great families who ever rule this country, when in power, by the principles of an oligarchy masked in the language of a democracy—and therefore the noble lord, whatever office he may fill, will always be a very considerable man.

Let me, then, call the attention of the House to a great event in the career of the noble lord—the key-note of the transactions which occurred when the noble lord was chief of the diplomacy of the country. The noble lord was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during a brief period in the year 1853—two or three months—but though the period was brief, the most important communications which have ever been made to this country, at any period of its history, were made when the noble lord was Secretary of State. Upon the noble lord fell the responsibility of deciding the course of England when vast events were near us, when a dark destiny was impending over Europe, and when the conduct of the English ministry might have averted that fate and the consequences of a great conflict. A whisper was heard, a rumour was spread, that secret communications¹ of a very different character from those which had been laid upon the table of this House, had taken place between the Court of St. Petersburg and the English Government. They were denied, not by the Government, but by those who seemed to have authority to deny them. I extorted myself from the noble lord the Secretary of State the admission that those documents existed. Such was the feeling of Parliament and of the country—though, I admit, I cannot justify the conduct of any Government in producing those papers—they were produced, they are on the table, they are

¹ *I.e.* the proposal of the Czar to Sir George Hamilton Seymour that England should agree to a partition of Turkey, taking Egypt for herself.

among the most precious records of the history of the age, and there we learnt, from the lips as it were of the late Emperor of Russia himself, his resolution to accomplish the partition of Turkey, and that partition was to be accomplished mainly by assuming rights of a protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Porte which in the last despatch of the Russian minister we hear, as a protectorate, never existed.

What was the conduct of the noble lord the chief of the diplomacy of England under these circumstances? Observe well this important phase of those transactions, and you will find, as I will show you, the key-note of disaster, you will find it the cause of the failure of the recent negotiations, and the probable cause of great difficulties and dangers to this country. The noble lord, after ample time, wrote a secret and confidential despatch to Sir George Hamilton Seymour upon the propositions of the Emperor of Russia and upon the general tenor of the confidential communications which were then taking place. I must invite the attention of the First Minister, who admires the ability of his colleague so much, to these remarks. The noble lord (Lord John Russell) wrote a despatch which was much admired when it first appeared. The despatch was partly historical and partly diplomatic. The noble lord was of opinion that the Sultan was not in the same state as the Spanish king in the time of Louis XIV., or the last of the Medici. Certainly those sovereigns had no children, and the Sultan has as many wives as the wisest monarch, and so many children that he is obliged to marry them to his ministers. With all this historical display, which, while unaccompanied by anything injurious, reflects great honour upon the country producing such a statesman, the noble lord proceeded—

‘To these cautions Her Majesty’s Government wish to add that in their view it is essential that the Sultan should be advised to treat his Christian subjects in conformity with the principles of equity and religious freedom which prevail generally among the enlightened nations of Europe. The more the Turkish Government adopts the rules of impartial law and equal administration, the less will the Emperor of Russia find it necessary to apply that exceptional protection which His

Imperial Majesty has found so burdensome and inconvenient, though no doubt prescribed by duty, and sanctioned by treaty.'

Not to taunt the noble lord with an error (though probably the most gross error ever made by a Secretary of State); not to twit the noble lord with a fatal admission (for everyone gets into a scrape sometimes, and we who are a popular assembly know that duties press so upon public men, which they can only half fulfil, that all sometimes make mistakes; though a Secretary of State who in a secret and confidential despatch makes a mistake is less entitled to the charity of men than mere individuals), I will remind the House that I called attention, when that despatch was so much admired, to this fatal admission. The noble lord never made the slightest answer. He could not make any answer, and I should never have brought it forward again but for the remarkable reason I am about to place before the House, and which the House will in a moment see is exercising a fatal influence on this country.

The mistake of the noble lord was to acknowledge the protectorate of Russia over the Christian subjects of the Porte which Count Nesselrode has just told us does not exist; and, not only to acknowledge, but to tell us 'its exercise is prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty.' When the noble lord told the House some time ago that everybody knew what the 'Four Points' were, I took an opportunity of saying, that I, for one, did not know what the 'Four Points' were. Up to the moment the protocols were placed on the table, we never had a formal and authentic statement of what the 'Four Points' were; but at last the papers were laid upon the table, and the 'Four Points' are now in the hands of the Parliament of England, of those honourable gentlemen who will sanction or oppose the resolution which I am about to submit. Here we have at last the 'Four Points,' and I beg you to turn to the fourth point, bearing in mind the noble lord's famous historical despatch, and the interpretation which he put upon the treaties of Kainardji and others, acknowledging a protectorate and declaring its exercise to be not only legal but obligatory. What do we see in the fourth article of the Conference of Vienna? Remember this article has been produced by the prolonged

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thought, the deep meditation, the unrivalled learning, of the greatest statesmen of Europe Here is the summary of what they believe to be the cause of the most important event of the present day

‘Russia in renouncing the pretension to take under an official protectorate the Christian subjects of the Sultan of the Oriental ritual, equally renounces, as a natural consequence, the revival of any of the articles of her former treaties, and especially of the treaty of Koutchouk Kainardji, the erroneous interpretation of which has been the principal cause of the present war’

By whom was that erroneous interpretation made? Was it by the noble lord, or by the Emperor of Russia? If by the Emperor of Russia, it was assented to by the minister of England What right have we to interfere in this quarrel when the united wisdom of all these statesmen has found out that ‘the erroneous interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji has been the principal cause of the war’—and the erroneous interpreter is sitting before me And the very statesman who lashed on the passions of this country to war, when we had a springtide of national feeling in our favour which might have been directed to great ends, is sent by the First Minister as plenipotentiary of peace to the Conference of Vienna? But we are only at the commencement of the extraordinary mistakes, the fatal admissions, the disgraceful demeanour of that noble lord who displayed, we are told, consummate ability, though unsuccessful Why did you not give us an opportunity of examining the conduct of your unsuccessful Plenipotentiary? Why did you not move in Address to the Crown, congratulating Her Majesty on the admirable manner in which the negotiations have been carried on, while at the same time expressing a determination to prosecute the war with vigour? I am not at all surprised that you have avoided discussion There have been before now unsuccessful negotiations and unsuccessful negotiators, but it is equally true that ministers have been overthrown and branded by the verdict of an indignant Parliament for having acted and for having spoken in a manner similar to that which has been done and said by the noble lord The right honour-

able gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty laughs: it is not the first time I have been met with a laugh by the right honourable gentleman. He is a merry soul; but if he can answer what I am saying, let him do so. The noble lord arrived at Vienna early in March, and the first Conference, I think, was held on March 15. At first everything went on swimmingly, and subjects were discussed and settled about which in reality no difference of opinion existed, and then an admirable opportunity was afforded to the Russian envoys of making conciliatory sacrifices.

The Conference went on from March 15 to the 26th of that month, and then commenced the real business. Five or six meetings of the Conference had taken place, at which, as I have said, nothing of the slightest importance was settled—in fact, all that was settled might just as well have been settled by the post. There was no controversy about the first or second point, but at last, on March 26, the real difficulty arose; then was made apparent the real reason why the noble lord was sent to take part in the Conferences. Then came the discussion of the third point, and then it was that the noble lord was expected, among others, to obtain the admission of the Turkish empire into the European confederation, and to decide upon the manner in which the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea should cease to exist. Then commenced the real business of the Conference; but the noble lord before he touched upon the real point—remembering the mission of his life as much as his mission to Vienna—threw in a word with regard to representative Government for the Principalities, and, I believe, even hinted at something like a new Reform Bill for these countries. Prince Gortschakoff smiled, and naturally replied that that was not exactly the point that they had met to settle; and he hinted that a new Reform Bill for the Danubian Principalities might be postponed, as a new Reform Bill for a more important place had been postponed, and that it might be as well to get on a little with the real business of the meeting. The noble lord then rose and made the following unprecedented declaration, in reference to a very commonplace statement of Prince Gortschakoff at the commence-

ment of negotiations, and which was not referred to while the Conference was engaged on those articles which produced no controversy —

‘ Lord John Russell, recalling the declaration made by Prince Gortschakoff at the opening of negotiations, that he would consent to no condition incompatible with the honour of Russia, maintained that, in the eyes of England and of her allies, the best and only admissible conditions of peace would be those which, being the most in harmony with the honour of Russia, should at the same time be sufficient for the security of Europe and for preventing a return of complications such as that the settlement of which is now in question ’

Let us see to what that admission led. The noble lord states that, in the eyes of Europe and the allies, the only admissible conditions of peace were those most in harmony with the honour of Russia. What, I want to know, had the noble lord to do with the honour of Russia? I apprehend that the noble lord was not sent to Vienna to take care of the honour of Russia. No, Sir, the noble lord was sent to Vienna to take care of the honour of England. What happened under these circumstances? At that time—I am stating what I admit does not appear formally on the protocols, but I am stating what no well-informed person will for one moment contradict, and which is matter of general notoriety,—at that time there did exist an understanding to which Russia was not, I believe, bound by any formal instrument, but still an understanding did exist, that the Russian plenipotentiary, Prince Gortschakoff, and M. de Titoff, should take the initiative, and offer a plan which might lead to a satisfactory solution of the question how the preponderance of the power of Russia in the Black Sea might be made to cease. I do not think that the noble lord will deny that, although the Russian ministers were not bound by the understanding, still their feeling had been felt upon the subject, and it was clearly understood that they should take the initiative and propose some plan which they believed would afford a satisfactory solution to the difficulty—the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea.

No sooner, however, had the noble lord made the declara-

tion that, in the eyes of Europe and the allies, the best and, indeed, only admissible terms of peace were 'those which should be most in harmony with the honour and dignity of Russia,' than—

'Prince Gortschakoff, while congratulating himself on the conciliatory disposition with which the question had been hitherto touched upon in the Conference, said that he was prepared to discuss the means of execution which should be proposed by the plenipotentiaries, and that he did not consider himself in a position in which he ought to take the initiative on this subject.'

(Lord J. Russell: As Count Buol had suggested.

Mr. Disraeli: I did not say 'as the noble lord had suggested.' I would not misrepresent the noble lord, but anyone who thinks the correction of the noble lord makes any difference in my argument is entirely mistaken.)

'As Count Buol had suggested. Appreciating at the same time the sentiments of courtesy and conciliation which, according to the unanimous language he had just heard, seemed to have inspired this proposition, he declared himself ready to take it *ad referendum*, reserving to himself to make known to the Conference the answer which he should receive from his Court.'

M. de Titoff spoke to a similar purport. Aarif Effendi, however, who appears to have been the only man of sense present—

'While declaring that he was not authorised to take the initiative in propositions relating to the third point, expressed a hope that his Government would accede to those which the plenipotentiaries of France and of Great Britain have reserved to themselves to make on this subject.'

Instead of taking the initiative, Prince Gortschakoff immediately referred to his Court, using those bland expressions which, of course, induced the minister of England and the other ministers to believe that he was only going to refer to his Court for fresh powers to make those proposals which it was expected he would make. Well, Sir, delay after delay occurred, and it was not until April 17—the admission of the noble lord having been made on March 26 that, in the eyes of the allies, the best and only admissible conditions of peace were those

most in harmony with the honour of Russia—that Prince Gortschakoff received his instructions from St. Petersburg. What were these instructions, or rather what was the result of them? On April 17, Prince Gortschakoff at the Conference of that date said —

‘That his Court, though fully appreciating the reasons which had prompted the members of the conference to surrender to the cabinet of St. Petersburg the initiative of the proposals respecting the third point, did not feel it incumbent on itself to take the initiative which had been offered to it—’

And must now beg the allies to take the initiative, feeling of course confident that what the allies had laid down by the mouth of the noble lord, ‘that the best and only admissible conditions of peace would be those which were in harmony with the honour of Russia,’ must be conceived in a spirit much more agreeable to Russia than Russia herself could possibly devise. Is there a doubt about it? To prove that such was the case, let me refer to the recent circular note of Count Nesselrode, and let me see how that most experienced of living statesmen treats this subject. That statesman has produced a diplomatic paper of great ability, in which he takes a survey of the transactions at the Vienna Conference and examines with critical eye the conduct of European statesmen and on whose conduct did he fix? Upon that of the English minister, and more especially upon the fatal admission of March 26. Count Nesselrode refers to what he terms *la détermination fort remarquable* of the noble lord which was to serve as a solution of the problem, and in that circular note he says —

‘Lord John Russell, recalling the declaration made at the opening of the negotiation by Prince Gortschakoff, that he would consent to no condition incompatible with the honour of Russia, maintained that, in the eyes of England and her allies, the best and only admissible conditions of peace would be those which, being the most in harmony with the honour of Russia, should at the same time be sufficient for the security of Europe, and for preventing a return of complications such as that the settlement of which is now in question. After this declaration, made formally in the Conference of March 26, Lord John Russell,

cannot be surprised that the propositions made on April 19 were not judged by the Imperial cabinet as "the best and only admissible ones," to quote the English plenipotentiary.'

And what were the propositions made by the noble lord? I have already told the House of great feats of history and diplomacy in connection with that celebrated despatch to which I have already referred, and here the noble lord fully sustains the character and position he had exhibited in connection with that famous despatch. At the commencement of the proceedings he made as fatal an omission as he had made in his despatch respecting the protectorate, and the noble lord supported his position by an historical illustration equally infelicitous but much more insulting. Here is the noble lord uselessly going out of his way to announce that the best and only possible conditions of peace in the opinion of England were those most compatible with the honour of Russia and at the same time sufficient for the security of Europe. Having made that admission, the noble lord proceeds on April 17 to do—what? To propose the most humiliating condition that could be made to any Government, and that humiliating condition he supported by a precedent which appears to me the most unhappy that could possibly have been brought forward. The noble lord appeals to the treaty of Utrecht and the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk. Now, under what circumstances were the treaty of Utrecht and the negotiations for the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk made? After a series of splendid victories achieved by the arms of Marlborough and Eugene; after a series of the most humiliating reverses on the part of a once great king; at the end of a long reign, when her resources were exhausted, France—high-spirited France—submitted to the greatest humiliation that her history records. And this is the precedent which is produced by the noble lord who commences with an admission which makes the honour of Russia an essential qualification in any condition of peace that may be made. I ask again, who made the noble lord the judge of the honour of Russia? What business had he to think of the honour of Russia? The noble lord had to think of the honour and interests of his own country; and surely Prince Gortscha-

koff and M. de Titoff were capable enough of attending to the honour of Russia. The admission made by the noble lord was the real cause of these Conferences being broken off. That I consider a very minor evil, according to my view of the nature and character of the conferences; but that admission was such as may embarrass this country and involve it in a position from which it will require all the patriotism of this House and the high spirit of this country to extricate it. The noble lord himself confessed that the admission he had made was the cause of the rupture of the negotiations. That is actually the admission of the noble lord at the time when he professes his regret at Russia not taking the initiative. On April 17, after the extraordinary illustration to which I have referred had been repudiated by Prince Gortschakoff, he himself adds:—

‘Since the Court of Russia has declined, the chances of success attending the negotiations for peace appeared in his eyes much diminished.’

It was therefore in consequence of the noble lord’s conduct, by his own avowal, that the chances of peace were much diminished. I say, therefore, that the noble lord has placed the possibility of peace by negotiation almost out of the question by his conduct at the Conferences at Vienna. The noble lord allowed the Conference for a considerable period to waste its energies in settling matters which required no arrangement; and when Russia had the appearance of conciliating public opinion by apparently considerable concessions about nothing at all—when he had placed Russia in a position to obtain the favourable opinion of the Congress—the noble lord then came to the point and so managed the Conference that it appears that, because Russia would not consent to one single point, we had in fact been deprived of that peace which otherwise might have been attained. What a handle does the noble lord give to any Peace Society or to any doubtfully when he allows Russia to say, ‘Here are twenty points which we concede, and the only one point which we insisted on is not conceded by England, so that the horrors of war are in consequence to continue.’ And what is that one point? The English minister proposes that Russia shall consent to that which must in his

opinion be a most humiliating act, because he illustrates it by a reference to the most humiliating occurrence in the history of France. Is the noble lord justified in visiting Russia with this humiliation after he has laid it down as a principle of negotiation that she 'is not to be humiliated'? I say, then, that the third point, according to all rules of diplomacy, inasmuch as it contained the real business of the question, ought to have been taken first. If the negotiators had met and said, 'We all know that the difficulty is in the third point; let us solve that difficulty, and if we solve it, all the rest is plain sailing,' that would have been a wise and intelligible proceeding. But you carried on your negotiations day after day with dissimulating courtesy, and because you put off to the last the real business, that dissimulating courtesy becomes a source of increased irritation.

Under these circumstances I cannot look at the conduct of the noble lord as Her Majesty's plenipotentiary at Vienna with that satisfaction with which it has been spoken of by the First Minister. I think I have shown to the House some reason to hesitate before they agree that the noble lord has shown great ability in these negotiations. I think the noble lord, instead of showing great ability in the conduct of these negotiations, has committed every blunder which a negotiator could possibly accomplish. I think he made fatal admissions at the commencement, and that he had recourse to dangerous illustrations to support his position. I think he dealt with the wrong part of his material first, and that he has so managed the really important element that, so far as negotiation is concerned, it is my solemn opinion diplomacy can no longer solve the knot. The noble lord has proceeded in these Conferences at Vienna in the same manner in which he proceeded as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with reference to the confidential communications of Russia. He met them by a diplomatic and historical move conjoined; and, guided by history, he has made a diplomatic mistake.

Sir, at last the protocols so anxiously looked for and so long sought were laid upon the table. The First Minister declined to address the Queen. We read those protocols; and the lan-

guage of the plenipotentiary seemed to be as ambiguous as his conduct was uncertain in the conduct of the negotiations, for exactly opposite conclusions were drawn by different parties in the House. The member for Manchester says the negotiations authorised peace; this is also the opinion of the member for Carlisle and his friends. Another party thinks they necessarily conclude in war. We are therefore extremely anxious to obtain the opinion of the ministry upon the question, so that the country, in a state of great perplexity and some discontent, may be guided in their opinion by Her Majesty's Government. What is the position of the country? Is there to be peace, or is there to be war? Do you wish that there should be peace, or that there should be war? On what conditions do you wish to have peace? In what spirit are you going to carry on war? We do not ask the noble lord to let us know the precise and actual conditions on which peace ought to be obtained, as the noble lord the other night, with his usual happy power of perversion, seemed to represent; no man is so silly as to entertain such an idea. We know well that we must trust to the discretion of the Government in such matters, and especially as we are connected with an ally whom we love and respect. But what we want from Her Majesty's ministers is some general, though explicit, statement as to our position; and it is my object to-night to obtain it.

It is my object to do more than that: it is my object to show what is the cause of this perplexity; to show Her Majesty's ministers how ambiguous has been their language, and how much more ambiguous has been the conduct of their negotiations, in first stating the honour of Russia to be an element of the conditions of peace and then proposing conditions of peace which the strongest advocates of war could not suppose in the present state of affairs Russia would accept. Is not that ambiguity of language and uncertainty of conduct? If the noble lord was sincere when he said that, above all, the honour of Russia was to be one of the principal elements of the conditions of peace, his language in my opinion was feeble and mercurious. If the noble lord was not sincere, and did not mean what he said, then I think his language is liable to the

charge implicitly made against it by Count Nesselrode—that of duplicity. The noble lord must choose between those two qualities.

Well, the protocols being here, the First Minister of the Crown not fulfilling his duty by moving an Address to the Sovereign in respect to them, and a right honourable gentleman, who attempts to do that, giving notice of a motion which is suppressed, we, the members of this House, endeavour to extract some opinion from the Government; and what is the answer we receive? I am told that there have been no ambiguity of language and no uncertainty of conduct. Now, this is a grave question, and we must fully and completely enter into it. Therefore, let me call the attention of the House to the words of the First Minister of the Crown recently delivered. He said :—

‘With respect to the question whether negotiations are entirely broken off, my answer must be the same as I gave on a former evening—namely, that the elements of Conference permanently exist at Vienna, there being in that capital representatives of the British, French, Russian, Turkish, and of course Austrian Governments. If, therefore, at any time any proposition should be made by Russia, or by Austria on behalf of Russia, which might appear to offer a fair prospect of negotiations being prosecuted to a successful issue, there are means and elements in Vienna for resuming the negotiations.’

Is it not quite clear that there are in every capital in Europe almost, the representatives of the British, French, Turkish, Russian and Austrian Governments? And therefore, if at any time, propositions should be contemplated, they could be made in any European capital. But there is no proof whatever of any special negotiations going on, or of any reason why we should not investigate the conduct of Her Majesty’s Government and give our opinion upon these records of our unsuccessful plenipotentiary. What was the language used in another place by another minister (Lord Granville) on May 22? That noble lord said :—

‘With regard to the question which has been put by the noble and learned lord, my noble friend (Earl Grey), as a spectator of the scene which has been described as having taken place in the other House, would be able to give almost as ample

an answer as I can give myself. With regard to the state of negotiations at Vienna, it is not true as has been stated, that they have been finally closed. The Government are ready to receive any propositions that may lead to a safe and honourable peace, and they also leave themselves open to decline any terms which may lead to a contrary result. Certainly the Conferences are not closed, and under the circumstances of the case it is for the noble earl himself to consider what course he ought to adopt.'

I gave my comment on the language of the First Minister about a week ago, and I will now communicate to the House the comment of Lord Lyndhurst on the language of Lord Granville, for the purpose of showing that I do not stand alone in the opinion that the language of the Government is vague and ambiguous. Lord Lyndhurst said:—

'The noble lord says the negotiations are not closed; but are they going on? They may remain open for a twelve-month. Have any propositions been made which are still under consideration, or have they been rejected? Is there any probability of any further propositions being made, and if so, within what time? Or have the Government made up their minds as to the period at which there is any probability of the Conferences being concluded? I never heard anything more vague.'

Are we, then, with these statements made in this and the other House of Parliament, to be told that there is nothing vague, uncertain, or ambiguous in the language and conduct of ministers in reference to the great question of peace or war? Let me now recall your attention to a statement made by the noble lord opposite (Lord J. Russell), the unsuccessful negotiator, totally contrary to everything said by both his colleagues in the passages I have just quoted. On May 21 the noble lord said:—

'Certainly my opinion is that, whether the propositions lead to peace or not—because on that question I feel myself incompetent to give an opinion—the Austrian Government will, before the Conferences are finally closed, make some proposition to the members of these Conferences. I imagine that proposition must have one of two results—either it will be rejected by one, per-

haps by both, of the belligerent Powers, and then the Conferences are broken off, and no doubt it will be perfectly competent for any member of Parliament to ask this House to declare its opinion of the negotiations; or on the other hand, if that should not be the case, then again negotiations will be resumed, and there will be a greater prospect than there has been of peace being established.'

That is a totally different statement from the statements made by the First Minister and by Earl Granville. The latter tells you that there are representatives of the four Powers in Vienna (though, as I told you before, they may be found also in other capitals), and if any proposition is made, it will be received; but here the noble lord tells us most positively that the Austrian Government has some other proposition to make, and that it is expected by Her Majesty's Government. The noble lord distinctly stated that one more attempt at negotiation was to be made; which is quite a different account from that given by the First Minister and by Lord Granville. Well, is this the case, and is another attempt to be made? The inconsistencies are considerable. Here we have the statement of the First Minister that there is a permanent condition of Congress, and then we hear from the noble lord opposite a statement that there is going to be a final proposition, and then the Conferences are to be closed. Which is the true statement? Is another proposition expected, has it been made, and what are the general expectations of the Government as to its character? But this is not all. I am told that the language of the Government on this subject is not ambiguous. Why, what did Lord Clarendon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, say? The noble lord opposite having returned from his unsuccessful mission, Lord Clarendon said that he should lay before Parliament the official papers as soon as possible, and went on to say that, for his part, he very much disapproved Conferences or negotiations being carried on where there was no real business to conclude: that, he said, was the present state of things, though the Government would be prepared to answer any distinct proposition on the part of Russia. That was a very proper tone to take, but it was totally different from the ambiguous language

held by other ministers, which had something in it like 'leave the door open,' which I do not understand. I am against the principle of 'leaving the door open,' I say, shut the door, and let those who want to come in, knock at the door, and then let us endeavour to secure a safe and honourable peace.

Then, Sir, arrived the night for the motion of the member for Manchester, to which I need not now advert, as I have before alluded to it, and I refer to it only to notice the strange position taken up by the First Minister of the Crown on the occasion. That noble lord told us that he was not going to make an ignominious peace; and that the man who would do so would be a degraded outcast. I admired the tone of the noble lord. 'The captain is a brave man,' but we want something more than the assertion of the noble lord as to whether he is going to make an ignominious peace or not. The noble lord can advise the Crown to make peace without first asking this House. Let us, therefore, be well acquainted with the real character of his policy before he makes peace, and let us, above all, have a clear and explicit explanation of the real position of affairs. There is a sarcastic note, which I have no doubt honourable gentlemen will recollect in one of Mr. Gibbon's volumes in which he quotes an Arabian author named Abu-raaf, who stated that he was witness of a certain marvellous incident. But who, asks Mr. Gibbon, will be witness for Abu-raaf? The noble lord says he is not going to make an ignominious peace. The noble lord is witness for himself, but who will be witness for the noble lord? It is in the power of the minister to advise the Crown to make peace without asking the opinion of Parliament. Far be it from me to interfere with the prerogative of the Crown; but what other safeguard is there, when Parliament has adjourned, against an unwise exercise of that prerogative but a discussion in Parliament on the state of affairs by which we may become well acquainted with the feelings and views of ministers?

The noble lord the other night said he would not be forced by me into making the House acquainted with the confidential communications which were passing between Her Majesty's Government and our allies; but no one asks the noble lord on

what terms he intends to make peace. It would be the height of imprudence for any man to ask the noble lord to tell us the precise terms on which he proposes to make peace. He must act upon his own responsibility, in conjunction, of course, with our cherished ally ; but that is no reason why the noble lord should take a course which, in my opinion, must lead either to an ignominious peace or a lingering and fruitless war. That is why I press the noble lord. We have a right, I maintain, without trenching on the prerogative of the Crown, and without circumscribing the Government's liberty of action along with our ally, to interfere if we think that the noble lord and his colleagues are pursuing a course of policy which must either lead to the conclusion of an unsatisfactory peace, or else, which I think even more probable, to a lingering, fruitless and inglorious war. The noble lord told me the other night that, while I was objecting to the negotiations which were going on, I seemed to forget altogether the fact that the Government at the same time were carrying on war—effectively carrying it on ; and he insisted on this point with great vigour, apparently very much to his own satisfaction. Now, there I join issue altogether with the noble lord. I deny that you can carry on war effectively with this chronic state of negotiation.

Here, I think, lies the whole fallacy of the noble lord's policy. The cause of all the ill-success which has attended his efforts, and of the discontent and dissatisfaction which is now so prevalent in the country, may be traced to the principle on which the noble lord and the Government which preceded him, of which he was a member, have acted—that it is possible at the same time to make war and to negotiate for peace. It is pretty apparent, I think, that the noble lord has a false and limited idea of the manner of making war. I deny that all you have to do in order to make war is to levy taxes and to fit out expeditions. There is something else equally and perhaps I might say, though it may seem extravagant, more important even than raising money and recruiting troops. If you want to carry on war with vigour and efficiency, you must keep up the spirit of the people. Now, Sir, I deny that you can keep up the spirit of the nation in a struggle such as that

which we carried on with Napoleon, and such as that which we may have to carry on with the Emperor of Russia, if you are perpetually impressing on the country that peace is impending, and if you are perpetually showing the people that the point of difference between ourselves and our opponents is, after all, comparatively speaking, of a petty character. Men will endure great sacrifices if they think they are encountering an enemy of colossal power and resources. A nation will not count the sacrifices which it makes, if it supposes that it is engaged in a struggle for its fame, its influence and its existence. But when you come to a doubled and tripled income-tax; when you come to draw men away from their homes for military service; when you darken the hearths of England with ensanguined calamities—when you do all this, men must not be told that this is merely a question whether the Emperor of Russia shall have four frigates or eight. I say, the principle upon which the Government of the noble lord and the Government which preceded him have acted—that of keeping up a state of war and a state of negotiation simultaneously in action—is a fatal principle, and that to it may be traced the real cause of our disappointment and partly of our disaster. What effect has it had upon your militia? Why, I remember when the militia was first embodied there was aroused, even in the humblest cottage, that military spirit which, I think, is natural to the British people, but which had certainly not been shown for half a century. But what is the feeling now? The people understand the question now; they have read of the Conferences of Vienna; they believe that, after all, the differences between the parties is no very great one—that it is not a difference for which their blood should be lavished, or for which the country should appeal to their patriotism. Is there a murmur against increased taxation in the country? Do you think you would ever have heard a murmur against increased taxation if, at the same time you were calling for these increased sacrifices, you had not striven to impress on the public mind that you were not engaged in a struggle for an object worthy of the sacrifice?

Moreover, if you would carry on war effectively, it is neces-

sary, not merely to keep up the spirit of the nation, but also to keep up the spirit of foreign Powers. You may rest assured that so long as you appeal to a foreign Power as a mediator, that foreign Power will never be your ally. I do not say this with any want of respect for Austria. I think that the Court of Vienna has acted throughout these transactions with wisdom, with sagacity, and with prudence, and I am not surprised that its councils have been guided with so great ability when I remember that the minister of that country is a pupil of the greatest statesman that this age has produced. The genius of Metternich still guides the country which he has more than once saved; and if the policy of that great statesman be pursued, I am persuaded that in a struggle with Russia he is not the man, nor are those who have sat at his feet the men, to counsel base humiliation for that Power. If in 1828 the opinion of Prince Metternich had prevailed—if the policy which he recommended had been adopted by the English Government—the House in all probability would not at this moment have been called upon to discuss the all-important question of our war with Russia. Therefore, it was with no disparagement to the policy which I made that remark: it is in human nature to be disappointed when we ask a person to occupy the position of an ally, and he does not necessarily fulfil the duties of an ally.

I say, then, Sir, that so far as the interests of the noble lord is concerned, I trace its various and its fortunate consequences—I trace the satisfaction which are prevalent in all quarters of the alliance between diplomacy and war. I do not think that alliance objectionable; I think I can show the House that it is necessary to this double service; that the policy which is now followed, it must, I believe, lead to a public disaster. There are two courses open to us in war on Russia: in one case we may despoil her of her territories; in the other we may construct, in short, the map of Europe as we are now trying to untie, by the means. If there were a treaty of alliance

energy, backed by the enthusiasm of a people, unembarrassed by any public debt, and fortunate enough to possess as a colleague a general as young, as energetic, and as able as himself. I do not say that that is not a career which I should recommend to his attention, I do not presume to predict what the result of such a struggle would be, but I think few will deny that the hair of the youngest member present might grow grey before its termination.

There is another mode of waging war with Russia, an essentially protective mode. In adopting that mode, your object would be to protect your ally, to take care that his territory should not be violated, that his fortresses should be secure, and to check the preponderance of Russia in every quarter, not so much by reducing the influence of Russia as by increasing the power of Turkey. That was the war in which, from your declaration at its commencement, I thought we had embarked, but what have you done? Having embarked on a war to protect the Turkish Empire, you suddenly resolved to invade the Russian dominions, and all this time you were engaged in diplomatic transactions which were to carry out a protective policy. You have thus combined, therefore, an aggressive war with a protective diplomacy, and to this incoherent, inconsistent union I trace and attribute the dangers which are surrounding us, and which in my opinion, unless we terminate that union, must increase until they perhaps overwhelm you. A Conference in Vienna may cope with such questions as the government of a river, or the rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte. But Conferences at Vienna cannot cope with such subjects as the invasion of Russian provinces, the destruction of Russian fortresses, or the fortunes of accumulated hosts on the impatient territory of a proud foe. Wasting your time at Vienna in this protective diplomacy, all that you can do is to devise schemes which will apply to the objects of protective war. But the evil consequences upon the objects of aggressive war are duly traceable, because by this chronic diplomacy you not only check and destroy the spirit of the nation upon which, after all, you must rely, but by those very Conferences you are paralyzing your

allies and preventing that energy and exertion on the part of the European Powers which may be necessary to enable you to carry on your aggressive warfare and to extricate you from the dangers which you must meet. Sir, it may have been a great error, as I frankly confess I believe it has been, to depart from the protection of the Turkish empire to undertake the invasion of Russia, which you most rashly and, as I think, thoughtlessly decided upon; but having once entered upon that course, you must now meet the consequences of the policy you have pursued, and you cannot extricate yourselves from those consequences by Vienna Conferences. You will only increase your difficulties and augment your dangers if you trust to diplomacy. Your position is one that is entirely deceptive; and you never can carry on an aggressive war with success unless, on the one hand, you are supported by an enthusiastic people, and unless, on the other, you can count upon allies who know that you are determined to be victorious.

I have said, Sir, that there was at least one object in my making this motion, not a solitary, but a main object—namely, that I want the House of Commons by its vote to-night—I want even those most favourable to peace, provided, I suppose, that it is made upon honourable terms, and is likely to be permanent—for I trust that no honourable member would advocate any other kind of peace—I want this House by its decision to put an end to that vicious double system by which we have so long carried on an aggressive war and a protective diplomacy. I want the House of Commons to-night to say in distinct language that the time for negotiations has passed. No man, I think, will be inclined to deny that proposition who has read Count Nesselrode's circular. If negotiations could bring us an honourable peace and extricate the country from the dangers that surround it; if I thought there was even a chance of obtaining such results by means of negotiation, I might still have the weakness to cling to it; but I am convinced that further negotiations, instead of securing peace, will only aggravate the dangers and distresses of war. I am confident that, if negotiations are continued, the Government may be prevented, indeed, from making a disgraceful peace by the still latent

spirit of England, but the Government, if it persists in its present policy, will only substitute for such a peace a lingering, fruitless and inglorious war. I ask the House, therefore, to support this motion, because one of its main objects is to put an end to this fatal union between diplomacy and aggressive war.

Sir, it has been said that the motion which I am about to make expresses distrust in Her Majesty's Government. Be it so. Is there any man out of this House that does not feel distrust in Her Majesty's Government? I beg the noble lord to understand that I do not say this by way of taunt. I know full well, and it is a most sorrowful thing, that this distrust is not limited to Her Majesty's Government, and that it has been occasioned by the policy of the country for the last two years. That distrust reaches our generals, although they are victorious, it reaches our officers, although during the war they have achieved deeds of unprecedented valour, and maintained among their troops unexampled discipline, it reaches our aristocracy, although they have poured out their blood like water in the conflict, lastly—and this is the worst of all among the dark suspicions that have, alas! been rife—that distrust has reached even the practical workings of our representative institutions. And will you, then, hesitate to support me to-night in this the first effort to breathe some feeling of life into this House, in the dangerous circumstances in which, believe me, the House of Commons is placed? Further forbearance on our part cannot be submitted to by our constituents. I speak frankly. I say that silence is by them considered to be an abrogation of our functions. You must say 'Aye' or 'No' to the motion I am about to propose. I cannot believe that you will allow any miserable amendments to evade the issue which I am about to place before the House of Commons. That issue, is this: 'Will you put an end to this diplomatic subterfuge and this ministerial trifling?' It is a simple issue, and it will be so looked upon, I believe, here and elsewhere. I am told that I am to be met by an amendment. I find Sir, that a right honourable gentleman has done me the honour of adopting five lines of my composition. The right honourable gentleman

(Sir F. Baring) is a *miles emeritus* in the great struggles of political life. I must congratulate the present ministry upon its good fortune in always having a Privy Councillor to rush to its aid; and certainly it ought to be a wise Government that has so many amateur and veteran colleagues. I read that Sir F. Baring is to move an amendment to my motion in these terms:—

‘That this House, having seen with regret that the Conferences of Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for the country a safe and honourable peace.’

The latter portion of this amendment is taken from the words of my motion. Is this amendment which Sir Francis Baring is to move the amendment of the ministry? If it is their amendment, it is an act on their part which vindicates to a certain degree the course I have taken, and in every sense condemns themselves. If the noble lord and his colleagues think that this House ought in the present state of affairs, in consequence of the failure of these negotiations, to express their determination to support Her Majesty in the manner I have described, how can the noble lord reconcile it to himself that he did not himself, like a loyal minister of the Crown, come forward and propose an address, thanking Her Majesty for the papers which she has so graciously placed upon the table. I can hardly recall the passage, but I remember reading of an example in the history of this country which the noble lord the First Minister might well study in regard to communications of this nature proceeding from the sovereign. It is to be found in Cox’s ‘Life of Sir Robert Walpole,’ where it is stated that the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State, brought down papers relative to the threatened invasion of England, and laid them on the table of the House by Royal command. In consequence of some papers on the same subject having been previously laid on the table, and the Crown having been addressed with regard to them, the Duke of Newcastle said that it would not be necessary a second time to address the sovereign. I can

remember the spirit if I cannot repeat the words of Sir Robert Walpole on that occasion, when he made the only speech he ever delivered as Earl of Orford — ‘My Lords,’ I think he said, ‘is the English language so barren that we cannot find words to express our gratitude to His Majesty for every act of grace and condescension to this assembly?’ And, continuing in this strain of flowing and indignant eloquence, he so shamed the ministry that, although the Government party had a great majority in the House of Peers, that august assembly rose almost in a body and decided that it should address the monarch, while the Prince of Wales, who was then in Opposition, although he had not for some time been on speaking terms with the Earl of Orford, crossed the House, and warmly embracing that nobleman, exclaimed, ‘From this moment we are friends. I feel that you have vindicated the honour of the Crown, and represented the feeling of the country.’ Well, then, here is the amendment of the right honourable gentleman. Is it the amendment of the Government? Will they have courage to support the amendment? If they have, it is possible they may yet take Sebastopol, for a more audacious act was never perpetrated by any minister. It is not it cannot be. It is an amateur performance. I make this remark with regard, not to this amendment only, but also to some others of which I have heard. I wish to impress upon the House the difference between my motion and the shabby amendment that has been cribbed from my thoughts and clothed in my stolen language. What is the difference between them? It is this—both the motion and the amendment contain the assurance which I am sure honourable gentlemen on all sides will feel it their duty to proffer to the Crown of their determination to support Her Majesty in the war in which we are engaged, but in the amendment there is an omission of the words which, if they be adopted, will ring through England to-morrow, and will gladden the heart of many a patriot who is now discontented, but who will rejoice when he finds that the House of Commons have come to the issue I have just described and have decided by their vote to-night that there shall be an end to diplomatic subterfuge and ministerial trifling.

VOTE OF CENSURE—DENMARK AND GERMANY.

July 4, 1864.¹

[On July 23, 1863, the last night of the session, Lord Palmerston had said that if the independence, the integrity, and the rights of Denmark were assailed, 'those who made the attempt would find it was not Denmark alone with whom they had to contend.' When Denmark, encouraged by this assurance, appealed to arms, she was naturally disappointed at not receiving assistance from England. All our Government could say was that they could not have gone to war with Germany except in conjunction with France, and that France had refused. The following speech is intended to show why France refused. Lord Russell had thrown over the Emperor about Poland, and this was the natural consequence. The motion for an address to Her Majesty 'to assure Her Majesty that we have heard with deep concern that the sittings of that Conference have been brought to a close without accomplishing the important purposes for which it was convened; to express to Her Majesty our great regret that, while the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government has failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the councils of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace,' was defeated by the small majority of eighteen. On the same night a similar resolution was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of nine.]

MR. SPEAKER,—Some of the longest and most disastrous wars of modern Europe have been wars of succession. The Thirty Years' War was a war of succession. It arose from a dispute respecting the inheritance of a duchy in the north of Europe, not very distant from that Duchy of Holstein which now engages general attention. Sir, there are two causes why wars originating in disputed succession become usually of a prolonged and obstinate character. The first is internal dis-

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

cord, and the second foreign ambition. Sometimes a domestic party, under such circumstances, has an understanding with a foreign potentate, and, again, the ambition of that foreign potentate excites the distrust, perhaps the envy, of other Powers; and the consequence is, generally speaking, that the dissensions thus created lead to prolonged and complicated struggles. Sir, I apprehend—indeed I entertain no doubt—that it was in contemplation of such circumstances possibly occurring in our time, that the statesmen of Europe, some thirteen years ago, knowing that it was probable that the royal line of Denmark would cease, and that upon the death of the then king, his dominions would be divided, and in all probability disputed, gave their best consideration to obviate the recurrence of such calamities to Europe. Sir, in these days, fortunately, it is not possible for the Powers of Europe to act under such circumstances as they would have done a hundred years ago. Then they would probably have met in secret conclave and have decided the arrangement of the internal government of an independent kingdom. In our time they said to the King of Denmark, ‘If you and your people among yourselves can make an arrangement in the case of the contingency of your death without issue, which may put an end to all internal discord, we at least will do this for you and Denmark—we will in your lifetime recognise the settlement thus made, and, so far as the influence of the Great Powers can be exercised, we will at least relieve you from the other great cause which, in the case of disputed successions, leads to prolonged wars. We will save you from foreign interference, foreign ambition, and foreign aggression.’ That, Sir, I believe, is an accurate account and true description of that celebrated Treaty of May, 1852, of which we have heard so much, and of which some characters are given which in my opinion are unauthorised and unfounded.

There can be no doubt that the purpose of that treaty was one which entitled it to the respect of the communities of Europe. Its language is simple and expresses its purpose. The Powers who concluded that treaty announced that they concluded it, not from their own will or arbitrary impulse, but

at the invitation of the Danish Government, in order to give to the arrangement relative to the succession an additional pledge of stability by an act of European recognition. If honourable gentlemen look to that treaty—and I doubt not that they are familiar with it—they will find the first article entirely occupied with the recitals of the efforts of the King of Denmark—and, in his mind, successful efforts—to make the necessary arrangements with the principal estates and personages of his kingdom, in order to effect the requisite alterations in the *lex regia* regulating the order of succession; and the article concludes by an invitation and appeal to the Powers of Europe, by a recognition of that settlement, to preserve his kingdom from the risk of external danger.

Sir, under that treaty England incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and by Russia. If, indeed, I were to dwell on moral obligations—which I think constitute too dangerous a theme to introduce into a debate of this kind—but if I were to dwell upon that topic, I might say that the moral obligations which France, for example, had incurred to Denmark, were of no ordinary character. Denmark had been the ally of France in that severe struggle which forms the most considerable portion of modern history, and had proved a most faithful ally. Even at St. Helena, when contemplating his marvellous career and moralising over the past, the first emperor of the dynasty which now governs France rendered justice to the complete devotion of the Kings of Denmark and Saxony, the only sovereigns, he said, who were faithful under all proof and the extreme of adversity. On the other hand, if we look to our relations with Denmark, in her we found a persevering though a gallant foe. Therefore, so far as moral obligations are concerned, while there are none which should influence England, there is a great sense of gratitude which might have influenced the councils of France. But, looking to the treaty, there is no legal obligation incurred by England towards Denmark which is not equally shared by Russia and by France.

Now, the question which I would first ask the House is this: How is it that, under these circumstances, the position

of France relative to Denmark is one so free from embarrassment—I might say, so dignified—that she recently received a tribute to her demeanour and unimpeachable conduct in this respect from Her Majesty's Secretary of State, while the position of England, under the same obligation, contained in the same treaty, with relation to Denmark, is one, all will admit, of infinite perplexity, and, I am afraid I must add, terrible mortification? That, Sir, is the first question which I will put to the House, and which, I think, ought to receive a satisfactory answer, among other questions, to night. And I think that the answer that must first occur to everyone—the logical inference—is that the affairs of this country with respect to our obligations under the treaty of 1852 must have been very much mismanaged to have produced consequences so contrary to the position occupied by another Power equally bound with ourselves by that treaty.

Sir, this is not the first time, as the House is aware, that the dominions of the King of Denmark have been occupied by Austrian and Prussian armies. In the year 1848, when a great European insurrection occurred—I call it insurrection to distinguish it from revolution, for, though its action was very violent, the ultimate effect was almost nothing—but when the great European insurrection took place, there was no portion of Europe more influenced by it than Germany. There is scarcely a political constitution in Germany that was not changed at that period, and scarcely a throne that was not subverted. The King of Denmark, in his character of a sovereign prince of Germany, was affected by that great movement. The population of Germany, under the influence of peculiar excitement at that time, were impelled to redress the grievances, as they alleged them to be, of their fellow-countrymen in the dominions of the King of Denmark who were his subjects. The Duchy of Holstein and the Duchy of Schleswig were invaded, a civil war was excited by ambitious princes, and that territory was ultimately subjected to a decree of that Diet with which now we have become familiar.

The office was delegated to the Austrian and Prussian armies to execute that decree, and they occupied, I believe, at one

time the whole continental possessions of the King of Denmark. In 1851 tranquillity had been restored to Europe, and especially to Germany, and the troops of Austria and Prussia ultimately quitted the dominions of the King of Denmark. That they quitted them in consequence of the military prowess of the Danes, though that was far from inconsiderable, I do not pretend to say. They quitted the territory, I believe the truth to be, in consequence of the influence of Russia, at that time irresistible in Germany, and deservedly so, because she had interfered and established tranquillity, and Russia had expressed her opinion that the German forces should quit the dominions of the King of Denmark. They quitted the country, however, under certain conditions. A diplomatic correspondence had taken place between the King of Denmark and the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, and the King of Denmark in that correspondence entered into certain engagements, and those engagements undoubtedly were recommended to a certain degree by the wish, if possible, to remedy the abuses complained of, and also by the desire to find an honourable excuse for the relinquishment of his provinces by the German forces. The King of Denmark never fulfilled the engagements into which he then entered, partly, I have no doubt, from negligence. We know that it is not the habit of mankind to perform disagreeable duties when pressure is withdrawn, but I have no doubt, and I believe the candid statement to be, that it arose in a great degree from the impracticable character of the engagements into which he had entered. That was in the year 1851.

In 1852, tranquillity being then entirely restored, the Treaty of May, which regulated the succession, was negotiated. And I may remind honourable members that in that treaty there is not the slightest reference to these engagements which the King of Denmark had entered into with the Diet of Germany, or with German Powers who were members of the Diet. Nevertheless, the consequence of that state of affairs was this, that though there was no international question respecting Denmark, and although the possible difficulties which might occur of an international character had been anticipated by the treaty of 1852, still in respect to the King of Denmark's capa-

city as Duke of Holstein and a sovereign German prince, a controversy arose between him and the Diet of Germany in consequence of those engagements, expressed in hitherto private and secret diplomatic correspondence carried on between him and certain German Courts. The House will understand that this was not an international question, it did not affect the public law of Europe; but it was a municipal, local, or, as we now call it, a federal question. Notwithstanding that in reality it related only to the King of Denmark and the Diet of Germany, in time it attracted the attention of the Government of England and of the ministers of the Great Powers, signatories of the treaty of 1852. For some period after the treaty of 1852, very little was heard of the federal question and the controversy between the Diet and the King of Denmark. After the exertions and exhaustions of the revolutionary years, the question slept, but it did not die. Occasionally it gave signs of vitality, and as time proceeded, shortly—at least, not very long—after the accession of the present Government to office, the controversy between the Diet and the King of Denmark assumed an appearance of very great life and acrimony.

Now, Her Majesty's ministers thought it their duty to interfere in that controversy between the German Diet and the King of Denmark—a controversy strictly federal and not international. Whether they were wise in taking that course appears very doubtful. My own impression is, and always has been, that it would have been much better to have left the *federal question between the Diet and the King to work itself out*. Her Majesty's ministers, however, were of opinion—and no doubt there is something to be said in favour of that opinion—that as the question, although federal, was one which would probably lead to events which would make it international, it was wiser and better to interfere by anticipation, and prevent, if possible, the federal execution ever taking place. The consequence of that extreme activity on the part of Her Majesty's ministers is a mass of correspondence which has been placed on the table, and with which, I doubt not, many gentlemen have some acquaintance, though they may have been more attracted

and absorbed by the interest of the more modern correspondence which has, within the year, been presented to the House. Sir, I should not be doing justice to the Secretary of State¹ if I did not bear testimony to the perseverance and extreme ingenuity with which he conducted that correspondence. The noble lord the Secretary of State found in that business, no doubt, a subject genial to his nature—namely, drawing up constitutions for the government of communities. The noble lord, we know, is almost as celebrated as a statesman² who flourished at the end of the last century for this peculiar talent. I will not criticise any of the lucubrations of the noble lord at that time. I think his labours are well described in a passage in one of the despatches of a distinguished Swedish statesman—the present Prime Minister, if I am not mistaken—who, when he was called upon to consider a scheme of the English Government for the administration of Schleswig, which entered into minute details with a power and prolixity which could have been acquired only by a constitutional minister who had long served an apprenticeship in the House of Commons, said :

‘Generally speaking, the monarchs of Europe have found it difficult to manage one Parliament, but I observe, to my surprise, that Lord Russell is of opinion that the King of Denmark will be able to manage four.’

The only remark I shall make on this folio volume of between 300 and 400 pages relating to the affairs of Schleswig and Holstein is this—I observe that the other Powers of Europe, who were equally interested in the matter, and equally bound to interfere—if being signatories to the treaty of 1852 justified interference—did not interpose as the English Government did. That they disapproved the course taken by us I by no means assert. When we make a suggestion on the subject, they receive it with cold politeness; they have no objection to the course we announce we are going to follow, but confine themselves, with scarcely an exception, to this conduct on their part. The noble lord acted differently. But it is really un-

¹ Earl Russell.

² The Abbé Sieyès, I suppose. Lord John Russell was the framer of six Reform Bills.

necessary for me to dwell on this part of the question—we may dismiss it from our minds, and I have touched on it only to complete the picture which I am bound to place before the House—in consequence of events which very speedily occurred

All this elaborate and, I may venture to say—not using the word offensively, but accurately—pragmatical correspondence of the noble lord on the affairs of Schleswig and Holstein was carried on in perfect ignorance on the part of the people of this country, who found very little interest in the subject, and even in Europe, where affairs of diplomacy always attract more attention, little notice was taken of it. This correspondence, however, culminated in a celebrated despatch which appeared in the autumn of 1862, and then, for the first time, a very great effect was produced in Europe generally—certainly in Germany and France—and some interest began to be excited in England. Sir, the effect of the Secretary of State's management of these transactions had been this, that he had encouraged—I will not now stop to enquire whether intentionally or not, but it is a fact that he had encouraged—the views of what is called the German party in this controversy. That had been the effect of the noble lord's general interference, but especially it was the result of the despatch which appeared in the autumn of 1862. But, Sir, something shortly and in consequence occurred which removed that impression. Germany being agitated on the subject, England at last, in 1863, having had her attention called to the case, which began to produce some disquietude, and gentlemen in this House beginning to direct their attention to it, shortly before the prorogation of Parliament, the state of affairs caused such a degree of public anxiety, that it was deemed necessary that an enquiry should be addressed to Her Majesty's Government on the subject, and that some means should be taken to settle the uneasiness which prevailed, by obtaining from ministers a declaration of their policy generally with regard to Denmark.

Sir, that appeal was not made, as I need hardly assure or even remind the House—for many were witnesses to it—in any party spirit, or in any way animated, I will say, by that discri-

plined arrangement with which public questions are by both sides of the House in general very properly brought before us. It was at the end of the session, when few were left, and when the answer of Her Majesty's ministers could not at all affect the position of parties, though it might be of inestimable interest and importance in its effect on the opinion of Europe and on the course of events. That question was brought forward by an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald) who always speaks on these subjects with the authority of one who knows what he is talking about. Well, Sir, a communication was made to the noble lord the First Minister on the subject, and it was understood on this side of the House, from the previous declarations of the noble lord, and our experience of his career generally, that it was not an appeal which would be disagreeable to him, or one which he would have any desire to avoid. The noble lord was not taken by surprise. He was communicated with privately, and he himself fixed the day—it was a morning sitting—when he would come down and explain the views of the Government in regard to our relations with Denmark.

I am bound to say that the noble lord spoke with all that perspicuity and complete detail with which he always treats diplomatic subjects, and in which we acknowledge him to be a master. The noble lord entered into particulars and gave to the House—who, with few exceptions, knew little about the matter—not only a popular, but generally an accurate account of the whole question. He described the constitution of the Diet itself. He explained, for the first time in Parliament, what federal execution meant. The noble lord was a little unhappy in his prophecy as to what was going to happen with regard to federal execution; but we are all liable to error when we prophesy, and it was the only mistake he made. The noble lord said he did not think there would be a federal execution, and that if there were we might be perfectly easy in our minds, for it would not lead to any disturbance in Europe. The noble lord also described the position of Holstein as a German duchy, in which the King of Denmark was a sovereign German prince, and in that capacity a member of the Diet, and subject to the

laws of the Diet. The dnehv of Schleswig, the noble lord said, was not a German duchy, and the moment it was interfered with, international considerations would arise. But the noble lord informed us in the most re-assuring spirit that his views on our relations with Denmark were such as they had always been. I will quote the exact passage from the noble lord's speech, not because it will not be familiar to the majority of those whom I am addressing, but because on an occasion like the present one should refer to documents, so that it may not be said afterwards that statements have been garbled or misrepresented. The noble lord concluded his general observations in this manner:—

‘We are asked what is the policy and the course of Her Majesty's Government respecting that dispute. We concur entirely with the honourable gentleman (the member for Horsa-ham), and, I am satisfied, with all reasonable men in Europe, including those in France and Russia, in desiring that the independence, the integrity, and the rights of Denmark may be maintained. We are convinced—I am convinced at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow those rights, and interfere with that independence, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend.’

I say that it is a clear, statesmanslike, and manly declaration of policy. It was not a hurried or hasty expression of opinion, because on a subject of that importance and that character, the noble lord never makes a hasty expression of opinion. He was master of the subject, and could not be taken by surprise. But on that occasion there was no chance of his being taken by surprise. The occasion was arranged. The noble lord was perfectly informed of what our subject on this side was. The noble lord sympathised with it. He wanted the disquietude of the public mind in England, and on the Continent especially, to be soothed and satisfied, and he knew that he could not arrive at such a desirable result more happily and more completely than by a frank exposition of the policy of the Government.

Sir, it is my business to-night to vindicate the noble lord

from those who have treated this declaration of policy as one used only to amuse the House of Commons. I am here to prove the sincerity of that declaration. It is long since the speech of the noble lord was delivered, and we have now upon our table the diplomatic correspondence which was then being carried on by Her Majesty's Government on the subject. It was then secret—it is now known to us all; and I will show you what at that very time was the tone of the Secretary of State in addressing the Courts of Germany mainly interested in the question. I will show how entirely and how heartily the secret efforts of the Government were exercised in order to carry into effect the policy which was publicly in the House of Commons announced by the noble lord. I think it must have been very late in July that the noble lord spoke—upon the 23rd I believe—and I have here the despatches which, nearly at the same period, were being sent by the Secretary of State to the German Courts. For example, hear how, on July 31, the Secretary of State writes to Lord Bloomfield at Vienna:—

‘You will tell Count Rechberg that if Germany persists in confounding Schleswig with Holstein, other Powers of Europe may confound Holstein with Schleswig, and deny the right of Germany to interfere with the one any more than she has with the other, except as a European Power. Such a pretension might be as dangerous to the independence and integrity of Germany, as the invasion of Schleswig might be to the independence and integrity of Denmark.’ (‘Denmark and Germany,’ No. 2, 115.)

And what is the answer of Lord Bloomfield? On August 6, after having communicated with Count Rechberg, he writes:—

‘Before leaving His Excellency I informed him that the Swedish Government would not remain indifferent to a federal execution in Holstein, and that this measure of the Diet, if persisted in, might have serious consequences in Europe.’ (P. 117.)

I am showing how sincere the policy of the noble lord was, and that the speech which we have been told was mainly for the House of Commons, was really the policy of Her Majesty's

Government. Well, that was to Austria. Let us now see what was the despatch to Prussia. In the next month Earl Russell writes to our minister at the Prussian Court.—

‘I have caused the Prussian *charge d'affaires* to be informed that if Austria and Prussia persist in advising the Confederation to make a federal execution now, they will do so against the advice already given by Her Majesty’s Government, and must be responsible for the consequences, whatever they may be. The Diet should bear in mind that there is a material difference between the political bearing of a military occupation of a territory which is purely and solely a portion of the Confederation, and the invasion of a territory which, although a part of the German Confederation, is also portion of the territory of an independent Sovereign, whose dominions are counted as an element in the balance of power in Europe.’

I have now shown the House what was the real policy of the Government with respect to our relations with Denmark when Parliament was prorogued, and I have also shown that the speech of the noble lord the First Minister of the Crown was echoed by the Secretary of State to Austria and Prussia. I have shown, therefore, that it was a sincere policy, as announced by the noble lord. I will now show that it was a wise and a judicious policy.

Sir, the noble lord having made this statement to the House of Commons, the House was disbanded, the members went into the country with perfect tranquillity of mind respecting these affairs of Denmark and Germany. The speech of the noble lord re-assured the country, and gave them confidence that the noble lord knew what he was about. And the noble lord knew that we had a right to be confident in the policy he had announced, because at that period the noble lord was aware that France was perfectly ready to co-operate with Her Majesty’s Government in any measure which they thought proper to adopt with respect to the vexed transactions between Denmark and Germany. Nay, France was not only ready to co-operate, but she spontaneously offered to act with us in any way we desired. The noble lord made his speech at the end of July—I think July 23—and it is very important to know what at that

moment were our relations with France in reference to this subject. I find in the correspondence on the table a despatch from Lord Cowley, dated July 31. The speech of the noble lord having been made on the 23rd, this is a despatch written upon the same subject on the 31st. Speaking of the affairs of Germany and Denmark, Lord Cowley writes:—

‘M. Drouyn de Lhuys expressed himself as desirous of acting in concert with Her Majesty’s Government in this matter.’

I have now placed before the House the real policy of the Government at the time Parliament was prorogued last year. I have shown you that it was a sincere policy when expressed by the noble lord. I have shown that it was a sound and judicious policy, because Her Majesty’s Government was then conscious that France was ready to co-operate with this country, France having expressed its desire to aid us in the settlement of this question. Well, Sir, at the end of the summer of last year, and at the commencement of the autumn, after the speeches and despatches of the First Minister and the Secretary of State, and after, at the end of July, that re-assuring announcement from the French Government, there was great excitement in Germany. The German people have been for some time painfully conscious that they do not exercise that influence in Europe which they believe is due to the merits, moral, intellectual, and physical, of forty millions of population, homogeneous and speaking the same language. During the summer of last year this feeling was displayed in a remarkable manner, and it led to the meeting at Frankfort, which has not been hitherto mentioned in reference to these negotiations, but which was in reality a very significant affair.

The German people at that moment found the old question of Denmark—the relations between Denmark and the Diet—to be the only practical question upon which they could exhibit their love of a united fatherland, and their sympathy with a kindred race who were subjects of a foreign prince. Therefore there was very great excitement in Germany on the subject; and to those who are not completely acquainted with the German character, and who take for granted that the theories they put forth are all to be carried into action, there were no doubt many

symptoms which were calculated to alarm the cabinet Her Majesty's Government, firm in their policy, firm in their ally, knowing that the moderate counsels urged by France and England in a spirit which was sincere and which could not be mistaken, must ultimately lead to some conciliatory arrangements between the King of Denmark and the Diet, I suppose did not much disquiet themselves respecting the agitation in Germany. But towards the end of the summer and the commencement of the autumn—in the month of September—after the meeting at Frankfort and after other circumstances, the noble lord the Secretary of State, as a prudent man—a wise, cautious, and prudent minister—thought it would be just as well to take time by the forelock, to prepare for emergencies, and to remind his allies at Paris of the kind and spontaneous expression on their part of their desire to co-operate with him in arranging this business. I think it was on September 16, that Lord Russell, the Secretary of State, applied in this language to our minister at Paris—our ambassador (Lord Cowley) being at that time absent—

‘As it might produce some danger to the balance of power, especially if the integrity and independence of Denmark were in any way impaired by the demands of Germany, and the measures consequent thereupon, if the Government of the Emperor of the French are of opinion that any benefit would be likely to follow from an offer of good services on the part of Great Britain and France, Her Majesty's Government would be ready to take that course. If, however, the Government of France would consider such a step as likely to be unwelcome, the two Powers might remind Austria, Prussia, and the Diet, that any act on their part tending to weaken the integrity and independence of Denmark would be at variance with the treaty of May 8, 1852’ (No 2, 130)

Sir, I think that was a very prudent step on the part of the Secretary of State. It was virtually a reminder of the offer which France had made some months before. Yet, to the surprise, and entirely to the discomfiture of Her Majesty's Government, this application was received at first with coldness, and afterwards with absolute refusal.

Well, Sir, I pause now to inquire what had occasioned this change in the relations between the two Courts. Why was France, which at the end of the session of Parliament was so heartily with England, and so approving the policy of the noble lord with respect to Denmark and Germany that she voluntarily offered to act with us in endeavouring to settle the question—why was France two or three months afterwards so entirely changed? Why was she so cold, and ultimately in the painful position of declining to act with us? I stop for a moment my examination of this correspondence to look for the causes of this change of feeling, and I believe they may be easily discerned.

Sir, at the commencement of last year an insurrection broke out in Poland. Unhappily, insurrection in Poland is not an unprecedented event. This insurrection was extensive and menacing; but there had been insurrections in Poland before quite as extensive and far more menacing—the insurrection of 1831, for example, for at that time Poland possessed a national army second to none for valour and discipline. Well, Sir, the question of the Polish insurrection in 1831 was a subject of deep consideration with the English Government of that day. They went thoroughly into the matter; they took the soundings of that question; it was investigated maturely, and the Government of King William IV. arrived at these two conclusions—first, that it was not expedient for England to go to war for the restoration of Poland; and, second, that if England was not prepared to go to war, any interference of another kind on her part would only aggravate the calamities of that fated people. These were the conclusions at which the Government of Lord Grey arrived, and they were announced to Parliament.

This is a question which the English Government has had more than one opportunity of considering, and in every instance they considered it fully and completely. It recurred again in the year 1855, when a Conference was sitting at Vienna in the midst of the Russian war, and again the English Government—the Government of the Queen—had to deal with the subject of Poland. It was considered by them under the most favourable circumstances for Poland, for we were at war then, and at

event which is looked back to with more regret than the partition of Poland. It is universally acknowledged by them to be one of the darkest pages of the history of the eighteenth century. But in France the Polish question is not a question which merely interests the sentiments of the millions. It is a political question, and a political question of the very highest importance—a question which interests ministers, and cabinets, and princes. Well, the ruler of France, a sagacious prince and a lover of peace, as the Secretary of State has just informed us, was of course perfectly alive to the grave issues involved in what is called the Polish question. But the Emperor knew perfectly well that England had already had opportunities of considering it in the completest manner, and had arrived at a settled conclusion with regard to it. Therefore, with characteristic caution, he exercised great reserve, and held out little encouragement to the representatives of the Polish people. He knew well that in 1855 he himself, our ally—and with us a conquering ally—had urged this question on the English Government, and that, under the most favourable circumstances for the restoration of Poland, we had adhered to our traditionary policy, neither to go to war nor to interfere. Therefore, the French Government exhibited a wise reserve on the subject.

But after a short time, what must have been the astonishment of the Emperor of the French when he found the English Government embracing the cause of Poland with extraordinary ardour! The noble lord the Secretary of State and the noble lord the First Minister, but especially the former, announced this policy as if it were a policy new to the consideration of statesmen, and likely to lead to immense results. He absolutely served a notice to quit on the Emperor of Russia. He sent a copy of this despatch to all the Courts of Europe which were signatories of the treaty of Vienna, and invited them to follow his example. From the King of Portugal down to the King of Sweden there was not a signatory of that treaty who was not, as it were, clattering at the palace gates of St. Petersburg, and calling the Czar to account respecting the affairs of Poland. For three months Europe generally believed that

there was to be a war on a great scale, of which the restoration of Poland was to be one of the main objects. Is it at all remarkable that the French Government and the French people, cautious as they were before, should have responded to such invitations and such stimulating proposals? We know how the noble lord fooled them to the top of their bent. The House recollects the six propositions to which the attention of the Emperor of Russia was called in the most peremptory manner. The House recollects the closing scene, when it was arranged that the ambassadors of France, Austria, and England, should on the very same day appear at the hotel of the minister of Russia, and present notes ending with three identical paragraphs, to show the agreement of the Powers. An impression pervaded Europe that there was to be a general war, and that England, France, and Austria were united to restore Poland.

The House remembers the end of all this—it remembers the reply¹ of the Russian minister, couched in a tone of haughty sarcasm and of indignation that deigned to be ironical. There was then but one step to take, according to the views of the French Government, and that was action. They appealed to that England which had itself thus set the example of agitation on the subject; and England, wisely as I think, recurred to her traditional policy, the Government confessing that it was a momentary indiscretion which had animated her councils for three or four months; that they never meant anything more than words; and a month afterwards, I believe, they sent to St. Petersburg an obscure despatch, which may be described as an apology. But this did not alter the position of the French Government and the French Emperor. The Emperor had been induced by us to hold out promises which he could not fulfil. He was placed in a false position towards both the people of Poland and the people of France; and therefore, Sir, I am not surprised that when the noble lord the Secretary of State, a little alarmed by the progress of affairs in Germany, thought it discreet to reconnoitre his position on September 17, he should have been received at Paris with coldness, and, ulti-

¹ 'I could not reply to assume that responsibility before God and man.'

mately, that his despatch should have been answered in this manner.

I fear that I may weary the House with my narrative, but I will not abuse the privilege of reading extracts, which is generally very foreign to my desire. Yet, on a question of this kind it is better to have the documents, and not lay oneself open to the charge of garbling. Mr. Grey, writing to Lord Russell on September 18, 1863, says:—

‘The second mode of proceeding suggested by your lordship—namely, “to remind Austria, Russia, and the German Diet, that any acts on their part tending to weaken the integrity and independence of Denmark would be at variance with the treaty of May 8, 1852,” would be in a great measure analogous to the course pursued by Great Britain and France in the Polish question. He had no inclination (and he frankly avowed that he should so speak to the Emperor) to place France in the same position with reference to Germany as she had been placed in with regard to Russia. The formal notes addressed by the three Powers to Russia had received an answer which literally meant nothing, and the position in which those three great Powers were now placed was anything but dignified; and if England and France were to address such a reminder as that proposed to Austria, Prussia, and the German Confederation, they must be prepared to go further, and to adopt a course of action more in accordance with the dignity of two great Powers than they were now doing in the Polish question. . . . Unless Her Majesty’s Government was prepared to go further, if necessary, than the mere presentation of a note, and the receipt of an evasive reply, he was sure the Emperor would not consent to adopt your lordship’s suggestion.’ (No. 2, 131.)

Well, Sir, that was an intimation to the noble lord with respect to the change in the relations between England and France that was significant; I think it was one that the noble lord should have duly weighed—and when he remembered the position which this country occupied with regard to Denmark—that it was a position under the treaty which did not bind us to interfere more than France itself—conscious, at the same time, that any co-operation from Russia in the same cause could

hardly be counted upon. I should have said that a prudent Government would have well considered that position, and that they would not have taken any course which committed them too strongly to any decided line of action. But so far as I can judge from the correspondence before us, that was not the tone taken by Her Majesty's Government, because here we have extracts from the correspondence of the Secretary of State to the Swedish minister, to the Diet at Frankfort, and a most important despatch to Lord Bloomfield—all in the fortnight that elapsed after the receipt of the despatch of Mr. Grey that notified the change in the feeling of the French Government. It is highly instructive that we should know what effect that produced in the system and policy of Her Majesty's Government. Immediately—almost the day after the receipt of that despatch—the Secretary of State wrote to the Swedish minister.—

‘Her Majesty's Government set the highest value on the independence and integrity of Denmark. . . . Her Majesty's Government will be ready to remind Austria and Prussia of their treaty obligations to respect the integrity and independence of Denmark.’ (No 2, 137–8.)

Then on September 29—that is, only nine or ten days after the receipt of the French despatch—we have this most important despatch, which I shall read at some little length. It is at page 136, and is really addressed to the Diet. The Secretary of State says:—

‘Her Majesty's Government, by the treaty of London of May 8, 1852, is bound to respect the integrity and independence of Denmark. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia have taken the same engagement. Her Majesty could not see with indifference a military occupation of Holstein, which is only to cease on terms injuriously affecting the constitution of the whole Danish monarchy. Her Majesty's Government could not recognise this military occupation as a legitimate exercise of the powers of the Confederation, or admit that it could properly be called a federal execution. Her Majesty's Government could not be indifferent to the bearing of such an act upon Denmark and European interests. Her Majesty's Government therefore earnestly entreat the German Diet to

pause and to submit the questions in dispute between Germany and Denmark to the mediation of other Powers unconcerned in the controversy, but deeply concerned in the maintenance of the peace of Europe and the independence of Denmark.' (No. 2, 145.)

My object in reading this despatch is to show that, after the indication of the change of feeling on the part of France, the policy—the sincere policy—of the Government was not modified. The Secretary of State writes thus on September 30, to Lord Bloomfield at Vienna:—

‘Her Majesty’s Government trust that no act of federal execution to which Austria may be a party, and no act of war against Denmark on the ground of the affairs of Schleswig, will be allowed to clash with this primary and essential treaty obligation. Her Majesty’s Government, indeed, entertain a full confidence that the Government of Austria is as deeply impressed as Her Majesty’s Government with the conviction that the independence and integrity of Denmark form an essential element in the balance of power in Europe.’ (No. 3, 147.)

Now, this takes us to the end of September; and I think the House up to this time tolerably clearly understands the course of the correspondence. Nothing of any importance happened in October that requires me to pause and consider it. We arrive, then, at the month of November, and now approach very important and critical affairs. The month of November was remarkable for the occurrence of two great events which completely changed the character and immensely affected the aspect of the whole relations between Denmark and Germany; and which produced consequences which none of us may see the end of. Early in November the Emperor of the French proposed a European Congress. His position was such—as he himself has described it, there can be no indelicacy in saying so—his position had become painful from various causes, but mainly from the manner in which he had misapprehended the conduct of the English Government with regard to Poland. He saw great troubles about to occur in Europe; he wished to anticipate their settlement; he felt himself in a false position with respect to his own subjects, because he had experienced a great

diplomatic discomfiture; but he was desirous—and there is no doubt of the sincerity of the declaration—he was desirous of still taking a course which should restore and retain the cordial understanding with this country. He proposed, then, a general Congress.

Well, when Parliament met on February 4 I had to make certain observations on the general condition of affairs, and I gave my opinion as to the propriety of Her Majesty's Government refusing to be a party to that Congress. Generally speaking, I think that a Congress should not precede action. If you wish any happy and permanent results from a Congress, it should rather follow the great efforts of nations; and when they are somewhat exhausted, give them the opportunity of an honourable settlement. Sir, I did not think it my duty to conceal my opinion, Her Majesty's Government having admitted that they had felt it their duty to refuse a proposition of that character. I should have felt that I was wanting in that ingenuousness and fair-play in politics which I hope, whoever sits on that bench or this, we shall always pursue, if, when the true interests of the country are concerned, agreeing as I did with the Government, I did not express frankly that opinion. But, Sir, I am bound to say that had I been aware of what has been communicated to us by the papers on the table—had I been aware, when I spoke on February 4, that only a week before Parliament met, that only a week before we were assured by a Speech from the Throne, that Her Majesty was continuing to carry on negotiations in the interest of peace—that Her Majesty's Government had made a proposition¹ to France which must inevitably have produced, if accepted, a great European war, I should have given my approbation in terms much more qualified.

But, Sir, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the propriety or impropriety of Her Majesty's Government acceding to the Congress, I think there were not then—I am sure there are not now—two opinions as to the mode and manner in which that refusal was conveyed. Sir, when the noble lord vindicated that curt and, as I conceive, most offen-

¹ Cf p. 117

sive reply, he dilated the other night on the straightforwardness of British ministers, and said that, by whatever else their language might be characterised, it was distinguished by candour and clearness, and that even where it might be charged with being coarse, it at least conveyed a determinate meaning. Well, Sir, I wish that if our diplomatic language is characterised by clearness and straightforwardness, some of that spirit had distinguished the despatches and declarations addressed by the noble lord to the Court of Denmark. It is a great pity that we did not have a little of that rude frankness when the fortunes of that ancient kingdom were at stake.

But, Sir, another event of which I must now remind the House happened about that time. In November the King of Denmark died. The death of the King of Denmark entirely changed the character of the question between Germany and Denmark. The question was a federal question before, as the noble lord, from the despatches I have read, was perfectly aware; but by the death of the King of Denmark it became an international question, because the controversy of the King of Denmark was with the Diet of Germany, which had not recognised the change in the *lex regia*, or the changes in the succession to the various dominions of the King. It was, therefore, an international question of magnitude and of a menacing character. Under these circumstances, when the question became European, when the difficulties were immensely magnified and multiplied—the offer of a Congress having been made on November 5, and not refused until the 27th, the King of Denmark having died on the 16th—it was, I say, with a complete knowledge of the increased risk and of the increased dimensions of the interests at stake, that the noble lord sent that answer to the invitation of the Emperor of the French. I say, Sir, that at this moment it became the Government of England seriously to consider their position. With the offer of the Congress, and with the death of the King of Denmark—with these two remarkable events before the noble lord's eyes, it is my duty to remind the House of the manner in which the noble lord the Secretary of State addressed the European Powers. Neither of these great events seems to have induced the noble

lord to modify his tone. On November 19, the King having just died, the Secretary of State writes to Sir Alexander Mallet, our minister to the Diet, to remind him that all the Powers of Europe had agreed to the treaty of 1852. On the 20th he writes a letter of menace to the German Powers, saying that Her Majesty's Government expect, as a matter of course, that all the Powers will recognise the succession of the King of Denmark as heir of all the States which, according to the treaty of London, were united under the sceptre of the late King. And on the 23rd, four days before he refused the invitation to the Congress, he writes to Lord Bloomfield —

'Her Majesty's Government would have no right to interfere on behalf of Denmark if the troops of the Confederation should enter Holstein on federal grounds. But if execution were enforced on international grounds, the Powers who signed the treaty of 1852 would have a right to interfere (No 3, 230)

To Sir Augustus Paget, our minister at Copenhagen, on November 30—the House will recollect that this was after he had refused the Congress, after the King had died, and after the question had become an international one—he writes announcing his refusal of the Congress, and proposing the sole mediation of England. Then he writes to Sir Alexander Mallet in the same month, that Her Majesty's Government can only leave to Germany the sole responsibility of raising a war in Europe, which the Diet seemed bent on making.

That is the tone which the Government adopted, after the consideration, as we are bound to believe, which the question demanded, after having incurred the responsibility of refusing the Congress offered by the Emperor of the French, after the death of the King of Denmark, after the question had been changed from a federal to an international one—such, I repeat, is the tone they took up, and in which they sent their menacing messages to every Court in Germany. I say that at the death of the King of Denmark it behoved Her Majesty's ministers, instead of adopting such a course, maturely to consider their position in relation to the events which had occurred. There were two courses open to Her Majesty's Government, both

intelligible, both honourable. It was open to them, after the death of the King of Denmark, to have acted as France had resolved under the same circumstances to act—France, who occupies, we are told, a position in reference to these matters so dignified and satisfactory that it has received the compliments even of a baffled minister. That course was frankly announced shortly afterwards to the English minister by the minister of France in Denmark. On November 19 General Fleury said to Lord Wodehouse at Copenhagen:—

‘That his own instructions from the Emperor were, not to take part in any negotiations here, but to tell the Danish Government explicitly that if Denmark became involved in a war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance.’

If England had adopted that course it would have been intelligible and honourable. We were not bound by the treaty of 1852 to go to the assistance of Denmark if she became involved in a war with Germany. No one pretends that we were. As a matter of high policy, much as we may regret any disturbance in the territorial limits of Europe, being a country the policy of which is a policy of tranquillity and peace, there were no adequate considerations which could have justified England in entering into an extensive European war, without allies, to prevent a war between Denmark and Germany. That was, I say, an honourable and intelligible course.

There was another course equally intelligible and equally honourable. Though I am bound to say that the course which I should have recommended the country to take would have been to adopt the same position as that of France, yet, if the Government really entertained the views with respect to the balance of power which have been expressed occasionally in the House by the noble lord, and in a literary form by the Secretary of State—from which I may say I disagree, because they appear to me to be founded on the obsolete tradition of an antiquated system, and because I think that the elements from which we ought to form an opinion as to the distribution of the power of the world must be collected from a much more extensive area, and must be formed of larger and more varied elements: but let that pass: yet, I say, if Her Majesty’s Government

were of opinion that the balance of power was endangered by a quarrel between Germany and Denmark, they were justified in giving their advice to Denmark, in threatening Germany, and in taking the general management of the affairs of Denmark, but they were bound, if a war did take place between Germany and Denmark, to support Denmark. Instead of that, they invented a process of conduct which I hope is not easily exemplified in the history of this country, and which I can only describe in one sentence—it consisted of menaces never accomplished and promises never fulfilled.

With all these difficulties they never hesitate in their tone. At least, let us do them this justice—there never were, in semblance, more determined ministers. They seemed at least to rejoice in the phantom of a proud courage. But what do they do? They send a special envoy to Denmark, who was to enforce their policy and arrange everything. Formally the special envoy was sent to congratulate the King on his accession to the throne of Denmark, and all the other Powers did the same, but in reality the mission of Lord Wodehouse was for greater objects than that, and his instructions are before us in full. Without wearying the House by reading the whole of those instructions, I will read one paragraph, which is the last, and which is, as it were, a summary of the whole. They were written at the end of December. Recollect, this is the policy of the Government after refusing the Congress, and after the death of the King of Denmark, which had therefore incurred a still deeper responsibility, and which, we must suppose, had deeply considered all the issues involved. *This is the cream of the instructions given by the Government to Lord Wodehouse —*

‘The result to be arrived at is the fulfilment of the treaty of May 8, 1852, and of the engagements entered into by Prussia and Austria and Denmark in 1851–2’ (No 3, 353.)

Lord Wodehouse could not possibly be at fault as to what he was to do when he arrived at his destination. His was, no doubt, a significant appointment. He was a statesman of some experience, he had held a subordinate but important position in the administration of our foreign affairs, he had been a

minister at a northern Court; he had recently distinguished himself in Parliament by a speech on the question of Germany and Denmark, in which he took a decidedly Danish view. Lord Wodehouse received clear instructions as to what he was to do. But, at the same time, what was the conduct of the Secretary of State? While Lord Wodehouse was repairing to his post, did the Secretary of State in the least falter in his tone? It was about this time that the great diplomatic reprimand was sent to Sir Alexander Malet for having talked of the 'protocol' of 1852 instead of the 'treaty.' This was the time that instructions were sent out that if anybody had the hardihood to mention the 'protocol' of 1852 he was immediately to be stopped. However elevated his position might be, even if it were M. Bismarck himself, he was to be pulled up directly, in the full flow of his eloquence; note was to be taken of this great diplomatic lapsus, and the minister was to telegraph instantly home to his Government how he had carried out his instructions in this respect. On December 17 the noble lord thus wrote to Sir Andrew Buchanan, our ambassador at Berlin:—

'Let it suffice at present for Her Majesty's Government to declare that they would consider any departure from the treaty of succession of 1852, by Powers who signed or acceded to that treaty, as entirely inconsistent with good faith.' (No. 3, 383.)

Similar despatches were sent to Wurtemberg, Hanover, and Saxony. On December 23 the noble Earl wrote to Sir Andrew Buchanan:—

'If the overthrow of the dynasty now reigning in Denmark is sought by Germany, the most serious consequences may ensue.' (No. 3, 411.) (Cheers.)

I want to know what honourable members mean by cheering the words I have just quoted. If you wish to convey even to a little Power that if it does a certain thing you will go to war with it, you take care not to announce your intention in an offensive manner; because, were you to do so, probably, even the smallest Power in Europe would not yield. And certainly if you wish to tell a great Power in Europe what may be eventually the consequences if it should adopt a different line from

that which you desire, you would not abruptly declare that if it declined to accede to your wish you would declare war. Why, there are no despatches on record in the world—there is no record in any Foreign Office of language of this kind. The question is, what interpretation can be put on these threats. The Secretary of State writes again on December 25 to Sir Andrew Buchanan, stating that—

‘Any precipitate action on the part of the German Confederation may lead to consequences fatal to the peace of Europe, and may involve Germany, in particular, in difficulties of the most serious nature.’ (No. 4, 414.)

On December 26 the Secretary of State writes to Sir Alexander Malet, and sends him a copy of the treaty of 1852, in order that he may communicate it to the Diet. Now, that is the state of affairs after the King of Denmark’s death; after he had been perfectly acquainted with the policy of France; after he had been frankly told that the French Emperor had explicitly informed Denmark that if she got involved in war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance. Now the words ‘if she went to war’ might have been interpreted in two ways; because she might get into war without any fault of her own, and Germany might be the aggressor: but there could be no mistake in regard to the words ‘if she became involved in war.’ Neither Denmark nor England could make any mistake in regard to the policy of France, which the Secretary of State now says was a magnanimous policy.

Notwithstanding these threats, notwithstanding these repeated menaces, and notwithstanding every effort made by Her Majesty’s Government to prevent it, federal execution took place, as it was intended to take place. One day, after the most menacing epistle which I have ever read—the day after the copy of the treaty of 1852 had been solemnly placed before the Diet by Sir Alexander Malet—on December 27, federal execution took place. At any rate, I do not think that is evidence of the just influence of England in the counsels of Germany.

What was the course of Her Majesty’s Government at this critical conjuncture? Why, Sir, they went again to France.

After all that had happened their only expedient was to go and supplicate France. I will read the letter. (Mr. Layard: Hear, hear!) The honourable gentleman seems to triumph in the recollection of mistakes and disappointments. I will give him the date, but I should think it must really be seared upon his conscience. December 27 is the date of the federal execution: and Her Majesty's Government must have been in a state of complete panic, because on the 28th they make application to France, which is answered in a few hours by Lord Cowley: 'I said Her Majesty's Government were most sincerely anxious to——' (laughter). I wish really to be candid, not to misrepresent anything, and to put the case before the House without garbling any of the despatches.—'I said that Her Majesty's Government were most sincerely anxious to act with the Imperial Government in this question.' No doubt they were. I am vindicating your conduct. I believe in your sincerity throughout. It is only your intense incapacity that I denounce. The passage in the despatch is Shakspearean; it is one of those dramatic descriptions which only a masterly pen could accomplish. Lord Cowley went on:—

'Her Majesty's Government felt that if the two Powers could agree, war might be avoided; otherwise the danger of war was imminent. M. Drouyn de Lhuys said he partook this opinion; but as his Excellency made no further observation, I remarked it would be a grievous thing if the difference of opinion which had arisen upon the merits of a general Congress were to produce an estrangement which would leave each Government to pursue its own course. I hoped that this would not be the case. Her Majesty's Government would do all in their power to avoid it. I presumed I might give them the assurance that the Imperial Government were not decided to reject the notion of a Conference.' (No. 4, 444.)

Well, Sir, this received a curt and unsatisfactory reply. Nothing could be obtained from that plaintive appeal of Lord Cowley. Well, what did Her Majesty's Government do? Having received information that the threat of federal execution had been fulfilled, having appealed to France, and been treated in the manner I have described, what did the Govern-

ment do? Why, the Secretary of State, within twenty-four hours afterwards, penned the fiercest despatch he had ever yet written. It is dated December 31, 1863, and it is addressed to Sir Andrew Buchanan.—

‘Her Majesty’s Government do not hold that war would relieve Prussia from the obligations of the treaty of 1852. The King of Denmark would by that treaty be entitled still to be acknowledged as the sovereign of all the dominions of the late King of Denmark. He has been so entitled from the time of the death of the late King. A war of conquest undertaken by Germany avowedly for the purpose of adding some parts of the Danish dominions to the territory of the German Confederation might, if successful, alter the state of succession contemplated by the treaty of London, and give to Germany a title by conquest to parts of the dominions of the King of Denmark. The prospect of such an accession may no doubt be a temptation to those who think it can be accomplished; but Her Majesty’s Government cannot believe that Prussia will depart from the straight line of good faith in order to assist in carrying such a project into effect.’ (No. 4, 445.) (Ministerial cheers.)

You cheer as if it were a surprising thing that the Secretary of State should have written a single sentence of common sense. These are important State documents, and I hope Her Majesty’s Government are not so fallen that there is not a minister among them who is able to write a despatch—I do not say a bad despatch, but a very important one. I wish to call attention to its importance:—

‘If German nationality in Holstein, and particularly in Schleswig, were made the ground of the dismemberment of Denmark, Polish nationality in the Duchy of Posen would be a ground equally strong for the dismemberment of Prussia. It appears to Her Majesty’s Government that the safest course for Prussia to pursue is to act with good faith and honour, and to stand by and fulfil her treaty engagements. By such a course she will command the sympathy and approval of Europe; by a contrary course she will draw down upon herself the universal condemnation of all disinterested men. By this course alone war in Europe can be with certainty prevented.’ (No. 4, 445)

Well, Sir, that I think was a bold despatch to write after the rejection, for the second or third time, of our overtures to France. That brings us up to the last day of the year.

But before I proceed to more recent transactions, it is necessary to call the attention of the House to the remarkable contrast between the menaces lavished on Germany and the expectations—to use the mildest term—that were held out to Denmark. The first great object of Her Majesty's Government when the difficulties began to be very serious, was to induce Denmark to revoke the patent of Holstein—that is, to terminate its constitution. The constitution of Holstein had been granted very recently before the death of the King, with a violent desire on the part of the monarch to fulfil his promises. It was a wise and excellent constitution, by which Holstein became virtually independent. It enjoyed the fullness of self-government, and was held only by a sovereign tie to Denmark, as Norway is held to Sweden. The Danish Government were not at all willing to revoke the constitution in Holstein. It was one that did them credit, and was naturally popular in Holstein. Still, the Diet was very anxious that the patent should be revoked, because if Holstein continued satisfied it was impossible to trade on the intimate connection between Schleswig and Holstein, the lever by which the kingdom of Denmark was to be destroyed. The Diet, therefore, insisted that the patent should be revoked. Her Majesty's Government, I believe, approved the patent of Holstein, as the Danish Government had done, but, as a means of obtaining peace and saving Denmark, they made use of all the means in their power to induce Denmark to revoke that constitution. Sir Augustus Paget, writing to the Foreign Secretary on October 14, and describing an interview with M. Hall, the Prime Minister of Denmark, says:—

‘After much further conversation, in which I made use of every argument to induce his Excellency to adopt a conciliatory course, and in which I warned him of the danger of rejecting the friendly counsels now offered by Her Majesty's Government’
—(No. 3, 162)—

M. Hall promises to withdraw the patent. What interpretation could M. Hall place on that interview? He was called

upon to do what he knew to be distasteful, and believed to be impolitic. He is warned of the danger of rejecting those friendly counsels, and in consequence of that warning he gives way and surrenders his opinion. I would candidly ask what is the interpretation which in private life would be put on such language as I have quoted, and which had been acted upon by those to whom it was addressed?

Well, we now come to the federal execution in Holstein. Speaking literally, the federal execution was a legal act, and Denmark could not resist it. But from the manner in which it was about to be carried into effect, and in consequence of the pretensions connected with it, the Danes were of opinion that it would have been better at once to resist the execution, which aimed a fatal blow at the independence of Schleswig, and upon this point they felt strongly. Well, Her Majesty's Government—and I give them full credit for being actuated by the best motive,—thought otherwise, and wished the Danish Government to submit to this execution. And what was the sort of language used by them in order to bring about that result? Sir Augustus Paget replied in this way to the objections of the Danish minister—

‘I replied that Denmark would at all events have a better chance of securing the assistance of the Powers if the execution were not resisted.’

I ask any candid man to put his own interpretation upon this language. And on the 12th of the same month Lord Russell himself tells M. Bille, the Danish Minister in London, that there is no connection between the engagements of Denmark to Germany and the engagements of the German Powers under the treaty of 1852. After such a declaration from the English Minister in the metropolis—a declaration which must have had the greatest effect upon the policy of the Danish Government—of course they submitted to the execution. But having revoked the patent and submitted to the execution, as neither the one nor the other was the real object of the German Powers, a new demand was made which was one of the greatest consequence.

Now, listen to this. The new demand was to repeal the

whole constitution. I want to put clearly before the House the position of the Danish Government with respect to this much-talked-of constitution. There had been in the preceding year a Parliamentary Reform Bill carried in Denmark. The King died before having given his assent to it, though he was most willing to have done so. The instant the new King succeeded the Parliamentary Reform Bill was brought to him. Of course great excitement prevailed in Denmark, just as it did in England at the time of the Reform Bill under similar circumstances, and the King was placed in a most difficult position. Now, observe this: England, who was so obtrusive and pragmatical in the counsels which she gave, who was always offering advice and suggestions, hung back when the question arose whether the new King should give his assent to the Reform Bill or not. England was selfishly silent, and would incur no responsibility. The excitement in Copenhagen was great, and the King gave his assent to the Bill. But mark! At that moment it was not at all impossible that if Her Majesty's Government had written a despatch to Copenhagen asking the King not to give his assent to the Bill for the space of six weeks, in order to assist England in the negotiations she was carrying on in behalf of Denmark; and if the King had convened his council and laid before them the expressed wish of an ally who was then looked upon by Denmark with confidence and hope, especially from the time that France had declared she would not assist her, I cannot doubt that the King would have complied with a request that was so important to his fortunes. But the instant the King had sanctioned the new constitution, the English Government began writing despatches calling upon him to revoke it. Ay, but what was his position then? How could he revoke it? The King was a constitutional king; he could have put an end to this constitution only by a *coup d'état*; and he was not in a position, nor I believe if he were had he the inclination, to do such an act. The only constitutional course open to him was to call the new Parliament together, with the view of their revoking the constitution.

But see what would have been the position of affairs then. In England the Reform Act was passed in 1832, new elections

took place under it, and the House assembled under Lord Althorp, as the leader of the Government. Now, suppose Lord Althorp had come down to that House with a king's speech recommending them to revoke the Reform Act, and have asked leave to introduce another Bill for the purpose of reforming the constitution, would it not have been asking an utter impossibility? But how did Her Majesty's Government act towards Denmark in similar circumstances? First of all, the noble lord at the head of the Foreign Office wrote to Lord Wodehouse on December 20, giving formal advice to the Danish Government to repeal the constitution, and Lord Wodehouse, who had been sent upon this painful and, I must say, impossible office to the Danish minister, thus speaks of the way in which he had performed his task —

'I pointed out to M. Hall also that if, on the one hand, Her Majesty's Government would never counsel the Danish Government to yield anything inconsistent with the honour and independence of the Danish Crown, and the integrity of the King's dominions, so, on the other hand, we had a right to expect that the Danish Government would not, by putting forward extreme pretensions, drive matters to extremities.'

And Sir Augustus Paget, who appears to have performed his duty with great temper and talent, writing on December 22, says —

'I asked M. Hall to reflect what would be the position of Denmark if the advice of the Powers were refused, and what it would be if accepted, and to draw his own conclusions.' (No 4, 420)

Now, I ask, what are the conclusions which my gentleman — I do not care on what side of the House he may sit — would have drawn from such language as that? But before that, a special interview took place between Lord Wodehouse and the Danish Minister, of which Lord Wodehouse writes —

'It was my duty to declare to M. Hall that if the Danish Government rejected our advice, Her Majesty's Government must leave Denmark to encounter Germany on her own responsibility.'

Well, Sir, I ask again whether there are two interpretations

to be put upon such observations as these? And what happened? It was impossible for M. Hall, who was the author of the constitution, to put an end to it; so he resigned—a new Government is formed, and under the new constitution Parliament is absolutely called together to pass an Act to terminate its own existence. And in January Sir Augustus Paget tells the Danish Government, with some *naïveté*—

‘If they would summon the Rigsraad, and propose the repeal of the constitution, they would act wisely, in accordance with the advice of their friends, and the responsibility of the war would not be laid at their door.’

Well, then, these were three great subjects on which the representation of England induced Denmark to adopt a course against her will, and, as the Danes believed, against their policy. The plot begins to thicken. Notwithstanding the revocation of the patent, the federal execution, and the repeal of the constitution, one thing more is wanted, and Schleswig is about to be invaded. Affairs now become most critical. No sooner is this known than a very haughty menace is sent to Austria. From a despatch of Lord Bloomfield, dated December 31, it will be seen that Austria was threatened, if Schleswig was invaded, that

‘The consequences would be serious. The question would cease to be a purely German one, and would become one of European importance.’

On January 4, Earl Russell writes to Mr. Murray, at the Court of Saxony:—

‘The most serious consequences are to be apprehended if the Germans invade Schleswig.’ (No. 4, 481.)

On the 9th, again, he writes to Dresden:—

‘The line taken by Saxony destroys confidence in diplomatic relations with that State.’ (No. 4, 502.)

On January 18 he writes to Lord Bloomfield:—

‘You are instructed to represent in the strongest terms to Count Rechberg, and, if you shall have an opportunity of doing so, to the Emperor, the extreme injustice and danger of the principle and practice of taking possession of the territory of a State as what is called a material guarantee for the obtain-

ment of certain international demands, instead of pressing those demands by the usual method of negotiation. Such a practice is fatal to peace, and destructive of the independence of States. It is destructive of peace because it is an act of war, and if resistance takes place it is the beginning of war. But war so begun may not be confined within the narrow limits of its early commencement, as was proved in 1853, when the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by Russia as a material guarantee proved the direct cause of the Crimean war.' (No. 4, 564.)

It is only because I do not wish to weary the House that I do not read it all, but it is extremely well written. ['Read.'] Well, then, the despatch goes on to say:—

'Such a practice is most injurious to the independence and integrity of the States to which it is applied, because a territory so occupied can scarcely be left by the occupying force in the same state in which it was when the occupation took place. But, moreover, such a practice may recoil upon those who adopt it, and, in the ever-varying course of events, it may be most inconveniently applied to those who, having set the example, had flattered themselves it never could be applied to them.' (No. 4, 564.)

Well, the invasion of Schleswig is impending, and then an identic note is sent to Vienna and Berlin in these terms:—

'Her Majesty's Government having been informed that the Governments of Austria and Prussia have addressed a threatening summons to Denmark, the undersigned has been instructed to ask for a formal declaration on the part of those Governments that they adhere to the principle of the integrity of the Danish monarchy.' (No. 4, 565.)

And again, writing to Lord Bloomfield, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs speaks of the invasion as 'a breach of faith which may entail upon Europe wide-spread calamities.' But all these remonstrances were in vain. Notwithstanding these solemn warnings, notwithstanding this evidence that in the German Courts the just influence of England was lowered, the invasion of Schleswig takes place. And what is the conduct of the Government? They hurry again to Paris. They propose a joint declaration of the non-German Powers. Earl

Russell writes to Lord Cowley in the middle of January. An answer was sent, I believe, the next day, the 14th, and this is Lord Cowley's statement in reference to the opinion of the French Government:—

‘As to the four Powers impressing upon the Diet the heavy responsibility that it would incur if, by any precipitate measures, it were to break the peace of Europe before the Conference which had been proposed by the British Government for considering the means of settling the question between Germany and Denmark, and thereby maintaining that peace, can be assembled, M. Drouyn de Lhuys observed that he had not forgotten that when Russia had been warned by France, Great Britain, and Austria of the responsibility which she was incurring by her conduct towards Poland, Prince Gortschakoff had replied, “that Russia was ready to assume that responsibility before God and man.” He, for one, did not wish to provoke another answer of the same sort to be received with the same indifference.’ (No. 4, 536.)

The drama now becomes deeply interesting. The events are quick. That is the answer of the French Government; and on the next day Lord Russell writes to Lord Cowley to propose concert and co-operation with France to maintain the treaty—that is, to prevent the occupation of Schleswig. Lord Cowley writes the next day to Lord Russell that the French Government want to know what ‘concert and co-operation’ mean.¹ Lord Russell at last, on January 24, writes to say that concert and co-operation mean, ‘if necessary, material assistance to Denmark.’ That must have been about the same time when the cabinet was sitting to draw up Her Majesty's speech, assuring Parliament that negotiations continued to be carried on in the interest of peace. Now, Sir, what was the answer of the French Government when, at last, England invited her to go to war to settle the questions between Germany and Denmark? I will read the reply:—

‘M. Drouyn de Lhuys, after recapitulating the substance of my despatch of January 24 to your Excellency, explains very

¹ This is the statement referred to at page 102 as having been made only a week before the meeting of Parliament.

clearly the views of the French Government upon the subject. The Emperor recognises the value of the London treaty as tending to preserve the balance of power and maintain the peace of Europe. But the Government of France, while paying a just tribute to the purport and objects of the treaty of 1852, is ready to admit that circumstances may require its modification. The Emperor has always been disposed to pay great regard to the feelings and aspirations of nationalities. It is not to be denied that the national feelings and aspirations of Germany tend to a closer connection with the Germans of Holstein and Schleswig. The Emperor would feel repugnance to any course which should bind him to oppose in arms the wishes of Germany. It may be comparatively easy for England to carry on a war which can never go beyond the maritime operations of blockade and capture of ships. Schleswig and England are far apart from each other. But the soil of Germany touches the soil of France, and a war between France and Germany would be one of the most burdensome and one of the most hazardous in which the French Empire could engage. Besides these considerations, the Emperor cannot fail to recollect that he has been made an object of mistrust and suspicion in Europe on account of his supposed projects of aggrandisement on the Rhine. A war commenced on the frontiers of Germany could not fail to give strength to these unfounded and unwarrantable imputations. For these reasons, the Government of the Emperor will not take at present any engagement on the subject of Denmark. If, hereafter, the balance of power should be seriously threatened, the Emperor may be inclined to take new measures in the interest of France and of Europe. But for the present the Emperor reserves to his Government entire liberty.' (No. 4, 620.)

Well, Sir, I should think that, after the reception of that despatch, though it might have been very hard to convince the Foreign Secretary of the fact, any other person might easily have suspected that the just influence of England was lowered in another quarter of Europe.

Sir, I have now brought events to the period when Parliament met, trespassing, I fear, too much on the indulgence of

the House; but honorable members will remember that, in order to give this narrative to-day, it was necessary for me to peruse 1,500 printed folio pages, and I trust I have done no more than advert to those passages to which it was requisite to direct attention in order that the House might form a complete and candid opinion of the case. I will not dwell, or only for the slightest possible time, on what occurred upon the meeting of Parliament. Sir, when we met there were no papers: and I remember that when I asked for papers there was not. I will frankly say, on both sides of the House, a sufficient sense of the very great importance of the occasion, and of the singular circumstance that the papers were not presented to us. It turned out afterwards, from what fell from the Secretary of State in another place, that it was never intended that the papers should be presented at the meeting of Parliament. The noble lord at the head of the Government treated the inquiry for papers in a jaunty way, and said, ‘Oh! you shall have papers, and I wish you joy of them.’ That was the tone of the First Minister in reference to the most important diplomatic correspondence ever laid before Parliament since the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens; but we are all now aware of the importance of these transactions. It was weeks—months almost—before we became masters of the case, but during the interval the most disastrous circumstances occurred, showing the increased peril and danger of Denmark, and the successes of the invaders of her territory. We all remember their entrance into Jutland. We all remember the inquiries which were made on the subject and the assurances which were given. But it was impossible for the House to pronounce any opinion, because the papers were not before it, and the moment we had the papers, the Conference was announced.

One word with respect to the Conference. I never was of opinion that the Conference would arrive at any advantageous result; I could not persuade myself, after reading the papers, that, whatever might be the cause, anyone seriously wished for a settlement, except, of course, Her Majesty’s ministers, and they had a reason for it. The Conference lasted six weeks. It wasted six weeks. It lasted as long as a carnival, and, like

a carnival, it was an affair of masks and mystification. Our ministers went to it as men in distressed circumstances go to a place of amusement—to while away the time, with a consciousness of impending failure. However, the summary of the Conference is this, that Her Majesty's Government made two considerable proposals. They proposed, first, the dismemberment of Denmark. So much for its integrity. They proposed, in the second place, that the remainder of Denmark should be placed under the joint guarantee of the Great Powers. They would have created another Turkey in Europe, in the same geographical relation, the scene of the same rival intrigues, and the same fertile source of constant misconceptions and wars. So much for the independence of Denmark. These two propositions having been made, the one disastrous to the integrity and the other to the independence of Denmark, the Conference, even with these sacrifices offered, was a barren failure.

And I now wish to ask—after having, I hope, with some clearness and in a manner tolerably comprehensive, placed the case before honourable members—what is their opinion of the management of these affairs by Her Majesty's Government? I showed you that the beginning of this interference was a treaty by which England entered into obligations as regards Denmark not different from those of France. I have shown you, on the evidence of the Secretary of State, that the present position of France with respect to Denmark is one quite magnanimous, free from all difficulties and disgrace. I have shown you, I think, what every man indeed feels, that the position of England under this treaty, on the contrary, is most embarrassing, surrounded with difficulties, and full of humiliation. I have stated my opinion that the difference between the position of England and that of France arose from the management of our affairs. That appeared to me to be the natural inference and logical deduction. I have given you a narrative of the manner in which our affairs have been conducted, and now I ask you what is your opinion? Do you see in the management of those affairs that capacity, and especially that kind of capacity, that is adequate to the occasion? Do you find in it that sincerity, that prudence, that dexterity, that quickness of perception, and

those conciliatory moods which we are always taught to believe necessary in the transaction of our foreign affairs? Is there to be seen that knowledge of human nature, and especially that peculiar kind of science, most necessary in these affairs—an acquaintance with the character of foreign countries and of the chief actors in the scene?

Sir, for my part I find all these qualities wanting; and in consequence of the want of these qualities, I see that three results have accrued. The first is that the avowed policy of Her Majesty's Government has failed. The second is, that our just influence in the councils of Europe has been lowered. Thirdly, in consequence of our just influence in the councils of Europe being lowered, the securities for peace are diminished. These are three results which have followed in consequence of the want of the qualities to which I have alluded, and in consequence of the management of these affairs by the Government. Sir, I need not, I think, trouble the House with demonstrating that the Government have failed in their avowed policy of upholding the independence and integrity of Denmark. The first result may be thrown aside. I come therefore to the second. By the just influence of England in the councils of Europe I mean an influence contra-distinguished from that which is obtained by intrigue and secret understanding; I mean an influence that results from the conviction of foreign Powers that our resources are great and that our policy is moderate and steadfast. Since the settlement that followed the great revolutionary war, England, who obtained at that time—as she deserved to do, for she bore the brunt of the struggle—who obtained at that time all the fair objects of her ambition, has on the whole followed a Conservative foreign policy. I do not mean by a Conservative foreign policy a foreign policy that would disapprove—still less oppose—the natural development of nations. I mean a foreign policy interested in the tranquillity and prosperity of the world, the normal condition of which is peace, and which does not ally itself with the revolutionary party of Europe. Other countries have their political systems and public objects, as England had, though they may not have attained them. She is not to look upon them with unreasonable jealousy. The position of

England in the councils of Europe is essentially that of a moderating and mediatorial Power. Her interest and her policy are, when changes are inevitable and necessary, to resist so that these changes, if possible, may be accomplished without war, or, if war occurs, that its duration and asperity may be lessened. That is what I mean by the just influence of England in the councils of Europe. It appears to me that just influence of England in the councils of Europe has been lowered. Within twelve months we have been twice repulsed at St. Petersburg. Twice have we supplicated in vain at Paris. We have menaced Austria, and Austria has allowed our menaces to pass her like the idle wind. We have threatened Prussia, and Prussia has defied us. Our oburgations have rattled over the head of the German Diet, and the German Diet has treated them with contempt.

Again, Sir, during the last few months there is scarcely a form of diplomatic interference which has not been suggested or adopted by the English Government—except a Congress. Conferences at Vienna, at Paris, at London, all have been proposed, protocols, joint declarations, sole mediation, joint mediation, identic notes, sole notes, united notes—everything has been tried. Couriers from the Queen have been scouring Europe with the exuberant fertility of abortive projects. After the termination of a most important Conference, held in the capital of the Queen, over which the Chief Minister of Her Majesty's foreign relations presided, and which was attended with all the pomp and ceremony requisite for so great an occasion, we find that its sittings have been perfectly barren, and the chief ministers of the cabinet closed the proceedings by quitting the scene of their exertions, and appearing in the two Houses of Parliament to tell the country that they have no allies, and that, as they have no allies, they can do nothing. Pardon me, I must not omit to do justice to the exulting boast of the Secretary of State, who, in the midst of discomfiture, finds solace in the sympathy and politeness of the neutral Powers. I do not grudge Lord Russell the sighs of Russia or the smiles of France, but I regret that, with characteristic discretion, he should have quitted the battle of the Conference only to take

his seat in the House of Lords to denounce the perfidy of Prussia, and to mourn over Austrian fickleness. There wanted but one touch to complete the picture, and it was supplied by the noble lord the First Minister.

Sir, I listened with astonishment—I listened with astonishment as the noble lord condemned the vices of his victim, and inveighed at the last moment against the obstinacy of unhappy Denmark. Denmark would not submit to arbitration. But on what conditions did the German Powers accept it? And what security had Denmark that if in the Conference she could not obtain an assurance that the neutral Powers would support her by force on the line of the Schlei—what security, I say, had she that any other line would be maintained—an unknown line by an unknown arbiter? Sir, it does appear to me impossible to deny, under these circumstances, that the just influence of England in the councils of Europe is lowered. And now, I ask, what are the consequences of the just influence of England in the councils of Europe being lowered? The consequences are—to use a familiar phrase in the despatches—‘most serious,’ because in exact proportion as that influence is lowered the securities for peace are diminished. I lay this down as a great principle, which cannot be controverted, in the management of our foreign affairs. If England is resolved upon a particular policy, war is not probable. If there is, under these circumstances, a cordial alliance between England and France, war is most difficult; but if there is a thorough understanding between England, France, and Russia, war is impossible.

These were the happy conditions under which Her Majesty’s ministers entered office, and which they enjoyed when they began to move in the question of Denmark. Two years ago, and even less, there was a cordial understanding between England, France, and Russia upon this question or any question which might arise between Germany and Denmark. What cards to play! What advantages in the management of affairs! It seemed, indeed, that they might reasonably look forward to a future which would justify the confidence of Parliament; when they might point with pride to what they

had accomplished, and appeal to public opinion to support them. But what has happened? They have alienated Russia, they have estranged France, and then they call Parliament together to declare war against Germany. Why, such a thing never happened before in the history of this country. Nay, more, I do not think it can ever happen again. It is one of those portentous results which occur now and then to humiliate and depress the pride of nations, and to lower our confidence in human intellect. Well, Sir, as the difficulties increase, as the obstacles are multiplied, as the consequences of their perpetual errors and constant mistakes are gradually becoming more apparent, you always find Her Majesty's Government nearer war. As in private life we know it is the weak who are always violent, so it is with Her Majesty's ministers. As long as they are confident in their allies, as long as they possess the cordial sympathy of the great Powers, they speak with moderation, they counsel with dignity, but, like all incompetent men, when they are in extreme difficulty they can see but one resource, and that is force.

When affairs cannot be arranged in peace you see them turning first to St. Petersburg—that was a bold despatch which was sent to St. Petersburg in January last, to ask Russia to declare war against Germany—and twice to Paris, entreating that violence may be used to extricate them from the consequences of their own mistakes. It is only by giving Government credit, as I have been doing throughout, for the complete sincerity of their expressions and conduct that their behaviour is explicable. Assume that their policy was a war policy, and it is quite intelligible. Whenever difficulties arise, their resolution is instantly to have recourse to violence. Every word they utter, every despatch they write, seems always to look to a scene of collision. What is the state of Europe at this moment? What is the state of Europe produced by this management of our affairs? I know not what other honourable gentlemen may think, but it appears to me most serious. I find the great German Powers openly avowing that it is not in their capacity to fulfil their engagements. I find Europe impotent to vindicate public law because all the great alliances are broken down, and

I find a proud and generous nation like England shrinking with the reserve of magnanimity from the responsibility of commencing war, yet sensitively smarting under the impression that her honour is stained—stained by pledges which ought not to have been given, and expectations which I maintain ought never to have been held out by wise and competent statesmen.

Sir, this is anarchy. It therefore appears to me obvious that Her Majesty's Government have failed in their avowed policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of Denmark. It appears to me undeniable that the just influence of England is lowered in the councils of Europe. It appears to me too painfully clear that to lower our influence is to diminish the securities of peace. And what defence have we? If ever a criticism is made on his ambiguous conduct the noble lord asks me, 'What is your policy?' My answer might be my policy is the honour of England and the peace of Europe, and the noble lord has betrayed both. I can understand a minister coming to Parliament when there is a question of domestic interest of the highest character for consideration—such as the emancipation of the Catholics, the principles on which our commercial code is to be established or our representative system founded. I can quite understand—although I should deem it a very weak step—a minister saying, 'Such questions are open questions, and we leave it to Parliament to decide what is to be our policy.' Parliament is in possession of all the information on such subjects that is necessary or can be obtained. Parliament is as competent to come to a judgment upon the emancipation of any part of our subjects who are not in possession of the privileges to which they are entitled; the principles on which a commercial code is to be established or a representative system founded are as well known to them as to any body of men in the world; but it is quite a new doctrine to appeal to Parliament to initiate a foreign policy.

To initiate a foreign policy is the prerogative of the Crown, exercised under the responsibility of constitutional ministers. It is devised, initiated, and carried out in secrecy, and justly and wisely so. What do we know as to what may be going

on in Downing Street at this moment? We know not what despatches may have been written, or what proposals may have been made, to any foreign Power. For aught I know, the noble lord this morning may have made another proposition which may light up a general European war. It is for Parliament to inquire, to criticise, to support, or to condemn in questions of foreign policy, but it is not for Parliament to initiate a foreign policy in absolute ignorance of the state of affairs. That would be to ask a man to set his house on fire. I will go further. He is not a wise, I am sure he is not a patriotic, man who, at a crisis like the present, would accept office on conditions. What conditions could be made when we are in ignorance of our real state? Any conditions we could offer in a vote of the House of Commons carried upon a particular point might be found extremely unwise when we were placed in possession of the real position of the country. No, Sir, we must not allow Her Majesty's Government to escape from their responsibility. That is at the bottom of all their demands when they ask, 'What is your policy?' The very first night we met—on February 4—we had the same question. Parliament was called together by a ministry in distress to give them a policy. But Parliament maintained a dignified and discreet reserve and you now find in what position the ministry are placed to-night.

Sir, it is not for any man in this House, on whatever side he sits, to indicate the policy of this country in our foreign relations—it is the duty of no one but the responsible ministers of the Crown. The most we can do is to tell the noble lord what is not our policy. We will not threaten and then refuse to act. We will not lure on our allies with expectations we do not fulfil. And, Sir, if ever it be the lot of myself or any public men with whom I have the honour to act to carry on important negotiations on behalf of this country, as the noble lord and his colleagues have done, I trust that we least shall not carry them on in such a manner that it will be our duty to come to Parliament to announce to the country that we have no allies, and then declare that England can never act alone. Sir, those are words which ought never to have escaped the lips of a British minister. They are sentiments which ought never to have

occurred even to his heart. I repudiate, I reject them. I remember there was a time when England, with not a tithe of her present resources, inspired by a patriotic cause, triumphantly encountered a world in arms. And, Sir, I believe now, if the occasion were fitting, if her independence or her honour were assailed, or her empire endangered, I believe that England would rise in the magnificence of her might, and struggle triumphantly for those objects for which men live and nations flourish. But I, for one, will never consent to go to war to extricate ministers from the consequences of their own mistakes. It is in this spirit that I have drawn up this Address to the Crown. I have drawn it up in the spirit in which the Royal Speech was delivered at the commencement of the session. I am ready to vindicate the honour of the country whenever it is necessary, but I have drawn up this Address in the interest of peace. Sir, I beg leave to move the resolution of which I have given notice.

ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION.

[Speech on proposing vote of thanks to Her Majesty's forces, July 2, 1868. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gladstone, who pronounced a high panegyric not only on the troops but also on the conduct of the Government.]

MR. DISRAELI: I rise to move that the thanks of the House be given to those who planned and accomplished one of the most remarkable military enterprises of this century. When the invasion of Abyssinia was first mooted, it was denounced as a rash enterprise, pregnant with certain peril and probable disaster. It was described indeed as one of the most rash undertakings which had ever been recommended by a Government to Parliament. The country was almost unknown to us, or known only as one difficult of access, and very deficient in all those supplies which are necessary for an army. Indeed, the commander of this expedition had to commence his operations by forming his base on a desolate shore, and by creating a road to the land he invaded through a wall of mountains. Availing himself for this purpose of the beds of exhausted torrents, he gradually reached a lofty table-land—wild and for the most part barren—frequently intersected with mountain ranges of great elevation, occasionally breaking into ravines and gorges that were apparently unfathomable. Yet over this country, for more than 300 miles, the commander-in-chief guided and sustained a numerous host, composed of many thousands of fighting men, as many camp followers, and vast caravans of animals, bearing supplies, more numerous than both. Over this land he guided cavalry and infantry, and—what is perhaps the most remarkable part of the expedition—he led the elephants of Asia, bearing the artillery of Europe, over African

passes which might have startled the trapper and appalled the hunter of the Alps. When he arrived at the base of this critical rendezvous, he encountered no inglorious foe; and if the manly qualities of the Abyssinians sank before the resources of our warlike science, our troops, even after that combat, had to scale a mountain fortress, of which the intrinsic strength was such that it may be fairly said it would have been impregnable to the whole world had it been defended by the man by whom it was assailed. But all these obstacles and all these difficulties and dangers were overcome by Sir Robert Napier, and that came to pass which ten years ago not one of us could have imagined even in his dreams, and which must, under all the circumstances, be an event of peculiar interest to an Englishman—the standard of St. George was hoisted on the mountains of Rasselas.¹ If we turn from the conduct of the expedition to the character of the person who commanded it, I think it must be acknowledged that rarely has an expedition been planned with more providence and executed with more precision. In connection with it everything seems to have been foreseen and everything supplied. It would be presumptuous in me to dwell on the military qualities of the commander; but all must recognise, and all may admire, the sagacity and the patience, the temper and the resource, invariably exhibited. I shall, however, perhaps be justified in calling attention to the rare union of diplomatic ability and military skill in the conduct of Sir Robert Napier. Indeed, I do not think a public man has ever shown more discretion than he has done. Had it not been for his management of men—not merely in the skilful

¹ Mr. Justin M'Carthy, in his *History of Our Own Times*, says, the idea that Johnson in *Rasselas* had in his eye the actual geographical mountains of Abyssinia, made all England smile. Lord Stanley of Alderley has called attention to the fact that the description of the mountain in which the Abyssinian princes were confined, given by Francesco Alvarez, in his narrative of the *Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia* (1520–1527), a work which his lordship has translated, closely corresponds with Johnson's description of it in *Rasselas*, and he remarks very justly that as Johnson's first work was a translation of *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit, it is clear that his attention had been drawn to that country. Boswell himself makes a similar remark; and it is pretty evident, therefore, that those who laughed at the speech laughed too soon.

handling of his troops on an exhausting march, but in the way in which he moulded the dispositions of the native princes—the result might have been different. And he moulded them to his purpose without involving his country in any perilous contract or engagement. Under these circumstances I am sure the House will heartily offer and vote its thanks to this distinguished man. It has been said by the greatest soldier who ever flourished, that—at least in modern times—that the thanks of the House of Commons were a compliment the most appreciated by military men, and that, next to the favour of their Sovereign, the acknowledgment of their services by Parliament was the reward which they most valued. I have no doubt that Sir Robert Napier is influenced by those feelings; but the House of Commons at this moment will remember that this is not the first time nor the second that it has offered to him its thanks. Happy is the man who has been twice thanked by his country! By his splendid achievements in Abyssinia, Sir Robert Napier has only fulfilled the promise of the plains of India, and consummated his exploits on the Chinese battlefield.

It is, I may add, not the least interesting part of our business this evening to recognise the merits of another great branch of Her Majesty's forces. The army and navy have rarely acted together in the history of this country without successful results, but there have been, I think, few instances in which they have mutually assisted each other more effectually, and in which their combined exertions have been attended with greater success, than in the Abyssinian Expedition. I need not remind the House how much depends on the skill and efficiency with which the transport of troops and stores is conducted in such an undertaking. But I may recall to the recollection of the House, in order that they may clearly understand them, the very great difficulties attending the expedition in that respect, and the admirable manner in which those difficulties were surmounted. The number of vessels employed amounted to no fewer than 300, some of great tonnage collected from all parts of Her Majesty's dominions, yet all brought at the right moment to the right place, under the superintendence of Commodore Heath. The exertions of the navy were not,

however, limited merely to this important branch of public service. The unknown waters of Abyssinia were buoyed and lighted with a promptitude and certainty which cannot be too highly praised, and which were of the utmost importance ; and it was mainly owing to the great exertions of the navy, that water, on which the success of the expedition greatly depended, and the want of which for a moment threatened the successful accomplishment of the expedition, was supplied.

The building of the piers and the establishing of the condensing machines were mainly owing to the exertions of the navy, who on all occasions showed the utmost willingness to devote their labours to the success of this great enterprise. But it was not to the mere transport of troops, not to the mere buoying and lighting of Annesley Bay, or the mere condensing of water, that the duties and labours of the navy were limited. They equipped and manned a most efficient corps, which took a very active part in the invasion of Abyssinia—the Rocket Brigade. They were present on that great march during which Sir Robert Napier handled his troops with so much dexterity—a march requiring so much endurance on the part of our forces—and they joined in that critical operation, the scaling of the fortress of Magdala. Therefore, under these circumstances, the House will offer its most cordial and grateful thanks to Commodore Heath, who commanded the naval force.

In acknowledging the great services of the distinguished man who was the chief commander of the expedition, and of the eminent officer who commanded the navy, we must not be unmindful of the conduct of the men, both in the army and the navy. I think we may fairly say that the conduct of the troops and sailors was alike complete and admirable. There have been instances, no doubt, of rapid marches and triumphant fields, which have occasioned greater sensation at the moment, in the history of modern times ; but if you look to the exhibition of military virtue, I doubt whether the qualities of patience, endurance, and good temper, manifested under the most trying circumstances, have ever been more fully exemplified. I doubt whether the force of disciplined man was ever more successfully asserted. There was shown that gallantry on which we can

always count, and which enables our forces to meet any dangers and difficulties, but what was the most admirable, was the endurance and docility which were exemplified by the troops, and which enhanced the glorious result of the operations. The House, therefore, will, I am sure, acknowledge in a manner most grateful to the men, both of the army and navy, its sense of their services, and will take means by which that sense shall be made known to them through their respective commanding officers, making mention to each regiment the opinion of the House with reference to their services and conduct. There are many distinguished officers whose services they must also shortly acknowledge, and whose names were inserted in the resolution.

Before concluding, I would venture also to congratulate the House not on the conduct of the expedition, of which I have already treated, but on its character. When it was first announced that England was about to embark on a most costly and perilous expedition, merely to vindicate the honour of our Sovereign and to rescue from an unjust but remote captivity a few of our fellow subjects, the announcement was received in more than one country with something like mocking incredulity. But we have asserted the purity of our purpose. In an age accused, and perhaps not unjustly, of selfishness, and a too great regard for material interests, it is something, in so striking and significant a manner, for a great nation to have vindicated the higher principles of humanity. It is a privilege to belong to a country which has done such deeds. They will add lustre to the name of this nation, and will beneficially influence the future history of the world.

BLACK SEA CONFERENCE. February 24, 1871.¹

[In October 1870 Europe was startled by the announcement that one of the leading provisions of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 was about to be abrogated by the sole action of that Power whose schemes it was designed to check. Sir Andrew Buchanan, our representative at St. Petersburg, was informed by Prince Gortchakoff that his Imperial master did not intend to hold himself bound any longer by the articles of the Treaty which secured the neutralisation of the Black Sea. Sir Andrew Buchanan, after transmitting this intelligence to England, waited at St. Petersburg for instructions to demand his passports. The English Government, instead of adopting this course, sent an Envoy to Prince Bismarck to ask his advice upon the subject. He recommended a Conference; and the Conference averted war by conceding the demands of Russia. Mr. Disraeli, on the first night of the session, had pointed out that the neutralisation of the Black Sea was considered of the highest importance by the statesmen of 1855, and that the negotiation for peace at Vienna in the spring of that year had been broken off exclusively on that ground. Mr. Gladstone seemed inclined to doubt whether Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston had attached so much importance to this point as Mr. Disraeli represented, but admitted subsequently that in regard to Lord Clarendon he might have been mistaken, while Lord Palmerston's own speech of July 6, 1855, sufficiently shows what that great statesman thought about it.² But this was not all. When Mr. Odo Russell first saw Prince Bismarck he told the German Chancellor that the question was of such a nature that, as it then stood, 'England, with or without allies, would have to go to war with Russia.' Mr. Gladstone declared that our Envoy had no authority for such a statement, and

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

² If any further evidence is wanting it is supplied by Mr. Evelyn Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. pp. 85 and 105.

added that, in his opinion, the words had been wrongly attributed to him, and had really been uttered by Prince Bismarck. A despatch from Mr Russell, received three weeks afterwards, declared that the words were his own.]

SIR, in the remarks—the few remarks and the fewer inquiries—I am about to make respecting the Treaty of Paris of 1856, it is not my intention, or my wish, to enter into any discussion as to the great principles of policy involved in that subject. A more important theme could not engage, in my opinion, the attention of Parliament, and on a right appreciation of all the circumstances connected with it, I would venture to say that the future power of this country greatly depends—and, more than that, the fortunes of no inconsiderable part of the globe. But a subject of that kind is not to be treated in a casual and desultory manner. An honourable member¹ has already given notice of his intention to bring the whole question before the House, and I have no doubt that the House will then enter into the discussion with that interest and attention which the gravity of the question requires. The remarks that I am about to make are rather preparatory to a discussion of the matter. They will divest the theme of some controversial details, which, if not now treated, would only embarrass that greater discussion of policy which is involved in the notice that has been given. Among other points which I should like to decide to-night, would be to ascertain, for example, the avowed object of the Conference that is now sitting in London. That subject seems involved in an atmosphere of ambiguity. The reasons which have been given by persons in authority for that Conference appear to be perplexed, and, in a certain degree, contradictory. The whole matter seems to be mixed up with so much mysterious inconsistency, that I thought no time should be lost in order that the House of Commons should more precisely and accurately ascertain the state of affairs with respect to it. I therefore took the earliest opportunity I could of giving notice on that subject last Friday, but I was not so fortunate as to be able to bring the matter before the consideration of the House.

¹ Sir Charles Dilke

I had occasion to advert to the subject of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 in some remarks I made on the first night of this session, on the meeting of the House. They were necessarily of an imperfect character, and, from the view which I then took, it was not possible for me to enter into any detail with respect to that particular treaty. I had one object, and only one object, in making those remarks on the first night of our meeting. I thought that, considering the great events—almost unprecedented in importance—which had occurred in the interval since the prorogation, it was not inexpedient to draw the attention of the House to their great consequences. I wanted to impress upon the House that in the interval, in consequence of those events, there had been a great revolution in all our diplomatic relations—that all the principles and traditions with respect to external affairs had become obsolete—that the balance of power in Europe was destroyed—that in consequence of that balance of power being destroyed, there had been a repudiation of treaties by several States, and that of all existing countries the one which would most suffer by any diminution of diplomatic morality and any violation of public law would be our own. That was the object I had in making those remarks, and, as they necessarily extended over a variety of instances, it was not possible for me to dwell in any minute detail upon any particular treaty. Nevertheless, with regard to the treaty of 1856, I did venture to make more than one observation as to its character. I said distinctly with regard to that treaty, that Russia, in repudiating the conditions of the treaty which referred to the neutral character of the Black Sea, had, in fact, repudiated the very gist of the whole subject—the essence of the treaty; and that, in fact, that was the question for which we had struggled and made great sacrifices, and endured those sufferings which never can be forgotten.

Sir, I did not think it necessary to enter into any demonstration of such a position, even if I had the opportunity. I knew well that I was speaking to a House of Commons, of which even now a majority of the members were members of Parliament during the Crimean War, and were perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances which preceded, accompanied, and ter-

minated that great struggle. The House, therefore, I assumed was perfectly aware that after that war had been waged one whole year, Russia intimated her desire to come to some understanding with her opponents. The Government of Austria in 1855—the Government which, when I described as neutral, the right honourable gentleman disputed the accuracy of that definition, but which I find mentioned in official documents of 1855 as a Government friendly to both parties, to the allies and to Russia—the Government of Austria interfered with a view to bring about a pacification. I will treat the circumstances with extreme brevity, but it is necessary that I should place them clearly before the House. After some communications it was ascertained that peace might probably be successfully negotiated on four points—those celebrated four points which honourable gentlemen may still recollect. The first point referred to the government of the principalities. The second to the free navigation of the Danube. The third point was that some means were to be invented for terminating the naval supremacy of Russia in the Black Sea. The fourth point referred to the future protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

A Conference was held at Vienna—Russia having intimated that she was prepared to negotiate on these four points—that is to say, having admitted the principle which these four points embodied. The result of the negotiations was shortly this. The first two points, as framed by the allies, were, after discussion, admitted by Russia. The fourth point, which referred to the protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte, was never brought under formal discussion at the Conference, but Russia privately intimated that she would accede to that fourth proposition, and so no difficulty arose in that case. But with regard to the third point, when the Conference had to decide upon the means by which the naval supremacy of Russia was to be terminated in the Black Sea, great difficulties arose. It appears that Russia having admitted the principle of the third point, the allies, with great courtesy, and I think wisdom, suggested that Russia should herself propose the means by which that result should be attained. But, after waiting for

instructions from St. Petersburg, the Russian negotiators declined to do that; and, therefore, the proposition of the allies for establishing the neutral character of the Black Sea was brought forward, and that proposition, after considerable delay, and after waiting again for instructions from St. Petersburg, was utterly rejected by Russia.

The state of affairs, then, was this—Russia had consented formally to the first two propositions, and privately to the fourth. The government of the principalities, the free navigation of the Danube, the due protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte, not by one Power, but by all the Powers—these points were all conceded; and the point upon which the negotiations for peace were broken off was the neutral character of the Black Sea. A great responsibility, therefore, rested upon the negotiators of the allies, and especially upon the English Government, which took so eminent a lead in these negotiations. Was the war to be continued? Was immense treasure to be further expended, and great sacrifices of human life to be incurred, for this unsettled point—the neutralisation of the Black Sea? It was an awful responsibility, no doubt, to decide on this point; but responsibility in a free State is not, or should not be, a source of annoyance to individuals, but rather of honourable pride; and it would be well for the House to remember, so far as this country is concerned, who were the statesmen upon whom this great responsibility peculiarly devolved. The Prime Minister of this country then was Lord Palmerston; who, however some of his last feats of foreign policy may be questioned, must be admitted by all to be a man who had a most vigorous perception of what were the interests and duties of this country, and who at that time was unquestionably in the full exercise of his powers, and with no apparent diminution of that decision and that spirit with which he had always conducted our foreign affairs. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was that distinguished nobleman whom the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) invited more than two years ago to assist him by his experience—Lord Clarendon. The negotiator who represented this country at Vienna was a nobleman who was a member of this House for nearly half a century—who has the largest expe-

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rience of public affairs of any individual of our time, who has occupied every office, from Paymaster of the Forces to President of the Council, and who had been for seven years Prime Minister of England—Earl Russell

These were the men upon whom, so far as this country was concerned, peculiarly devolved the responsibility of deciding whether, under the circumstances, the war should be pursued. They did not hesitate, in order to obtain the neutrality of the Black Sea, as it is expressed in the Treaty of Paris, negotiated the following year, to recommend their Sovereign to prosecute the war, and not to cease until the allies had effected a settlement similar to that which Russia had rejected. Well, the war continued another year—and the House and the country have never forgotten the circumstances—great glory and honour to the allies and to Russia also, much exhibition of heroic conduct on both sides, and on both sides, no doubt, unprecedented suffering. In the course of another year Russia was exhausted, and the Treaty of Paris was negotiated. And what was that treaty? Russia was exhausted, but the allies, victorious and triumphant, though they had incurred immensely increased expenditure, and endured aggravated sacrifices of life, did not demand from Russia the Crimea, which they might have restored to Turkey. They did not demand any indemnity for the expenses of the war. All the points in that treaty, except the neutrality of the Black Sea, had been offered by Russia at Vienna in the preceding year, and therefore had been obtained by our negotiators in the first instance, but as a full satisfaction, as a settlement that completely justified the great exertions and sacrifices that had been incurred, as a settlement which they believed would secure the peace of the world, so far as that portion of it was concerned, they insisted that the neutrality of the Black Sea should be accomplished.

Now, Sir, having touched—I hope accurately—upon these important facts, and recalled them—I trust not without convenience as regards future discussion, I would venture to ask, Was I not justified in my statement the first night of the session that the neutrality of the Black Sea was the very basis and gist of the Peace of Paris of 1856—that it was the main

object of the war, the great result for the accomplishment of which this country and France and their allies made the vast sacrifices of life and treasure now so freely acknowledged? That being the case, I asked myself, Had we any reason to believe that the policy of England had ever changed? I believed myself it had not changed, I believe that it cannot change. But when I spoke the first night of the session we were not in possession of papers which have since been placed upon the table. Now, what do these papers show with reference to this policy? We find in those papers a despatch from the Queen's ambassador at St. Petersburg; and what does he say? Sir Andrew Buchanan writes to the Secretary of State, Lord Granville, and mentions that he had long foreseen that Russia would attempt a revision of the treaty of 1856, and that he had frequently expressed that opinion to his lordship and to the late Earl of Clarendon. From these papers it appears that what Sir Andrew Buchanan had long foreseen did at last occur, and, though he had for some time avoided touching on the subject with the Russian minister, he is at last obliged to encounter the disclosure which he had so long dreaded. And what were the expressions which were used on that occasion by Sir Andrew Buchanan to Prince Gortchakoff? He stated to the Russian minister that he had the most serious apprehensions as to the light in which the report would be viewed by Her Majesty's Government, and that he should expect to receive orders immediately to ask for his passports and to quit St. Petersburg.

Now, I ask the House to bear in mind that Sir Andrew Buchanan is one of the most experienced members of the diplomatic service. He has been engaged to my knowledge for forty years in posts of important trust; for I recollect that when I was at Constantinople in 1830 he was, if I mistake not, Secretary to the Embassy; and he is a man of ability and sagacity, as well as of discretion. Can it be doubted, then, that, having frequently expressed to Lord Granville and Lord Clarendon his apprehension of the danger which he foresaw, these distinguished statesmen had furnished him with instructions as to the tone he should adopt when the disclosure

was made, and the language which he should use? And that the language used by Sir Andrew Buchanan was language strictly in accordance with the instructions which he received, no one who knows him can for a moment doubt. That is a proof, therefore, in these papers that the policy of England, with reference to this question, had not undergone a change. But they furnish us, on that head, with another proof. Her Majesty's ministers in, the difficult position in which they were placed through the repudiation by Russia of the condition of the Treaty of Paris which refers to the Black Sea, took a step which, on this occasion, I will not criticise. I reserve any such criticism for that larger debate which is impending—but I may now at least observe that it seems to me to be one of the most remarkable steps ever taken by a Government. They resolved on sending a special envoy to Count Bismarck.

Now, I am not quarrelling with the Government, because, in a position of great difficulty, they decided on sending a special envoy to what may be called the Prussian Court. I can easily conceive adequate reasons why Her Majesty's ambassador at Berlin should not leave the seat of his labours. Nor am I here to quarrel with the selection made by the Government for the post. It is said that one of the tests of competency to fill the office of Prime Minister is the capacity for fixing on the right man for any public appointment, and I do not challenge for a moment the propriety of selecting Mr. Odo Russell in this particular instance. He may not have the experience of Sir Andrew Buchanan, and for a reason with which I am sure he will find no fault—because he is a younger man. But Mr. Odo Russell has, nevertheless, had great experience in diplomacy. He has had questions entrusted to him at a post where they were both critical and delicate; and, so far as I am acquainted with his conduct, has, upon all occasions, proved himself to be a man to whose judgment and knowledge might be safely committed the interests of his country. Mr. Odo Russell, moreover, was not abroad—and that was an additional reason why he should be selected as a special envoy to Versailles. He had been recalled from his diplomatic appointment, and promoted to a post in the Foreign Office of the

highest trust and importance. He was the right hand man of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and was in daily communication with his chief. Now, honourable gentlemen must see at once of how much consequence it is, when you have a special envoy who is to execute, under extraordinary circumstances, business of the most delicate and difficult kind, he should be a man with whom the minister is in personal connection, so that he should not have to depend merely on written instructions prepared for the special occasion ; but an envoy who—fresh from frequent intercourse with the Secretary of State and the head of the Government—should set out upon his mission thoroughly impressed and impregnated with their policy and their views, and thoroughly acquainted with their resources to meet all contingencies. Under such circumstances, we could hope and expect that its interests would be faithfully represented and attended to.

Now, what happened in the case of Mr. Odo Russell, our special envoy under such favourable circumstances, and personally so well qualified as he was for the post ? He left England late in November, and it was some time before he succeeded in arriving at Versailles, owing to the difficulties of travelling through the seat of war. He, however, arrived at Versailles at last, and lost no time in placing himself in communication with Count Bismarck. There is, in these papers, an interesting narrative of what occurred on that memorable occasion. Mr. Odo Russell was twice closeted with Count Bismarck in the course of the day. He saw him in the morning, and, in consequence of what then passed, Count Bismarck communicated with St. Petersburg. He saw him again at ten o'clock in the evening, and was closeted with him until midnight. Now, Mr. Odo Russell having, after much trouble and pains, obtained the interview which he sought for, did, I have no doubt, full justice to his mission, and spoke with that adroitness and judgment which became the representative of the interests of this country, instructed by the highest authorities of the State.

Well, what did Mr. Odo Russell say to Count Bismarck ? He pressed for a settlement of a question which, as he informs us, he had frankly proved to Count Bismarck was of a nature, in its

present state, to compel us, with or without allies, to go to war with Russia. I ask the House again, Was I not justified in the statement which I made on the first night of the session, that the question of the Black Sea was the real question which was involved in the Treaty of Paris? Have I not proved to the House that this was the view of eminent statesmen like Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Russell, who were engaged in the negotiations at Paris and Vienna? And have we not *prima facie* evidence that on the 22nd of November last this was the confirmed policy of the English Cabinet—the policy of such men as Lord Clarendon and Lord Granville? I was, I must confess, astonished to learn, having these papers before us, from the highest authority, that Mr Odo Russell made the representation to which I have just referred to Count Bismarck without the sanction of the Government. I have heard many remarkable things this session, which, although it has but just commenced, promises to be rife with interest. We heard last night, for example, that on Monday next a secret committee is to be moved for, in order to discover for the Government how to govern regenerated Ireland. How to govern regenerated Ireland! when we thought that we had employed the last two sessions in perfecting that exalted and sublime legislation which was not only to cure the evils of the past, but which even anticipated the remedies for the future! It seems to me, I must confess, that our Irish legislation is somewhat like our Crimean treaties, which assume a different character to that contemplated when they were originated. I heard also this session—and I look upon it as one of the most remarkable things of which I have any recollection—that a functionary¹ who sought to publish a correspondence connected with his department, which he not only believed to be necessary to vindicate his character, but to be of the greatest interest to

¹ Sir Spencer Robinson who was Controller of the Navy at the time of the loss of the Captain. A dispute arose between himself and Mr Childers, then First Lord of the Admiralty as to the responsibility for the disaster. It ended in the dismissal of Sir Spencer and when he asked Mr Gladstone to be allowed to publish the correspondence he received the above answer for which however it is only fair to say that Mr Gladstone had his own explanation.

the country, received permission to do so, provided he changed the dates. [Mr. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] Yes; that was a thing that certainly surprised me, and I am glad to see that the right honourable gentleman agrees with me at least on that point.

Secret committees and such frank permissions are certainly surprising things; but I cannot help regarding it as more surprising still that a special envoy should be selected at such a critical moment—himself admirably adapted, as nobody will deny, for the post, and with the immense advantage of being fresh from interviews with Ministers of State, and of receiving in person instructions from his chief—and that he should be sent on one of the most trying occasions not only in the history of his own country, but of Europe, not farther than Versailles, and should, the very first moment he encounters the great opponent with whom he had to deal, immediately take a course which his instructions did not justify. [Mr. Gladstone: ‘I never said that.’] The right honourable gentleman will, perhaps, by-and-by notice the observations which I am making. I heard what fell from him on a former night, and I was certainly under the impression that—to use a phrase which, though vernacular, is perhaps scarcely fit to be employed within these walls—Mr. Odo Russell was ‘thrown over’ by the right honourable gentleman. If it be a mistake, I believe it is a mistake which was shared by both sides of the House. I understood the right honourable gentleman distinctly to say, in answer to a distinct inquiry, that Mr. Odo Russell had no authority to make that representation.

There is one more observation I wish to make with regard to Mr. Odo Russell. For a special envoy to declare to a foreign minister that, with or without allies, we were prepared to go to war for a particular object, is one of the most decided announcements ever made upon political affairs. Admit that he had no authority to make the declaration—an admission which is overwhelming in its incredibility—why was no despatch written by the Secretary of State to contradict the declaration? Why was no printed record made with the frankness becoming an English Government, so that the indiscretion of the special agent should

not be concealed from us? Why do we not learn that, at the moment when Her Majesty's Government heard of such an announcement, the special envoy was told by a flash of lightning that he had exceeded his authority? Sir, there is not a line, not a scrap, not a jot to this effect, and until the inquiry was made and the answer given by the right honourable gentleman, no one doubted for a moment, looking to the character of the official papers, that the declaration was made by authority, and that Mr Odo Russell was sent to Count Bismarck to make it.

I have now, Sir, placed before the House these remarks, the object of which is to show, first, that I was entirely justified in the description I gave of the condition relating to the neutrality of the Black Sea in the Treaty of Paris on the first night of the session—that it was the cardinal point of British policy, that it was always so considered, that for it, and for it alone, the war was continued, and the greatest sacrifices made. I think I have also shown, from the papers furnished us by the Government, that until within a brief space—which we shall probably hear more about on another occasion—the cabinet was faithful and firm to this policy, and that men of the vast experience of our ambassador at the Court of St Petersburg, and the great ability of our special envoy at the Court of Versailles, were instructed—and, I think, admirably instructed—how to treat such a violation of the law of nations and of public morality. And now, Sir, having, I hope, placed this matter fairly before the House, let me advert to the remarkable manner in which my observations upon that head were met by the right honourable gentleman on the first night of the session. I had endeavoured to recall to the recollection of the House the vital importance of the neutralisation of the Black Sea. I did not enter into any proof of a policy which I believe was supported by the people of this country, and by the majority of the House, and upon which it appeared to me it was then far from necessary to enter into any controversy. I was content to confine myself to an opinion as to the vital importance of the neutralisation of the Black Sea. What said the right honourable gentleman? Lest I may be accused of

inaccuracy, I avail myself of a memorandum containing, I believe, an accurate report of the statement made by the right honourable gentleman. He entirely joined issue with me as to the vital importance of the neutralisation of the Black Sea. He said: 'That was never, as far as I know, the view of the British Government.' The right honourable gentleman said:—

'In this House, in the year 1856, I declared my confident conviction that it was impossible to maintain the neutralisation of the Black Sea. I do not speak from direct communication with Lord Clarendon; but I have been told since his death that he never attached value to that neutralisation. Again, I do not speak from direct communication, but I have been told that Lord Palmerston always looked upon the neutralisation as an arrangement which might be maintained and held together for a limited number of years, but which, from its character, it was impossible to maintain as a permanent condition for a great settlement of Europe.'

Now, Sir, upon these startling observations of the right honourable gentleman I will make one or two remarks. And, first, when the right honourable gentleman says the vital importance of the neutralisation of the Black Sea was never, as far as he knew, the view of the British Government, and that he had declared his confident conviction in 1856 that it would be impossible to maintain it, I would observe that the right honourable gentleman—unintentionally of course—conveyed an erroneous impression to the House by allowing himself to mix up his own individual opinions with those of the British Government. [Mr. Gladstone: 'No; I do not admit it.'] Does the right honourable gentleman complain of the accuracy of the report? Of course, I shall take any explanation which the right honourable gentleman has to offer, and if he said exactly the reverse of what is attributed to him, no one will congratulate the House and the country more sincerely than I shall. But, Sir, when the right honourable gentleman talks of the views of the British Government and brings forward himself as an authority, allow me to inform the House—because some time has elapsed, and we fortunately have a good

many young members among us, and some old ones—that when the right honourable gentleman made this speech against the importance of the neutralisation of the Black Sea in 1856 he was not a minister of the Crown, nor was he the leader of the Opposition. The right honourable gentleman was connected in this House with a minute coterie of distinguished men, who had no following in the country at the time. They were condemned by the country on account of their conduct with respect to this very question of the Black Sea and Turkish affairs generally.

Rightly or wrongly—I will not enter into the question now—the country was convinced that the Crimean War was occasioned by the lukewarmness and the hesitation of this small body of distinguished men. But of these distinguished men the most unpopular in the country was the right honourable gentleman, because, when war was inevitable and was even declared by the cabinet of Lord Aberdeen, the right honourable gentleman at that time having the control of the finances, it became necessary that he should propose the ways and means for carrying on the war, and the country was of opinion that the proposals of the right honourable gentleman were not adequate to the occasion, and were not such as the honour and interest of England demanded. The people of England remembered a celebrated item moved by the right honourable gentleman in Committee of Supply—namely, a vote proposed by him, in a spirit of ironical finance, for the despatch of Her Majesty's Guards to Malta and back again.¹ They never forgot and never forgave that item. They foresaw then, with an instinct of Englishmen which it is impossible to deceive, that we were about to prosecute a war in a spirit which must bring calamity and disaster upon the country. Such was the position of the right honourable gentleman, and, therefore, the House must not be influenced by his statement of the views of the British Government of that time. He did not represent the British Government. He represented no party in this House and no party in this country.

I come now to the statement of the right honourable gen-

¹ Financial statement March 6 1851. Hansard vol 31 p 379

tleman about Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston. It was a very responsible thing, I ventured to say, to advise the continuance of the war in 1855. But almost as responsible a thing, in my opinion, is it to impute to statesmen of great eminence, and now unfortunately departed, opinions not only which they did not hold, but which were contrary to their convictions, which contradicted their whole policy, and which would intimate that public men of the highest distinction who proposed a policy, in enforcing which the treasure of the country was expended without stint, and the most precious lives of the country were sacrificed, were laughing in their sleeves at the excitement of the nation. I would make one remark respecting those extraordinary quotations of the opinions of Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston as to the neutralisation of the Black Sea. Nothing can be more inconvenient and injurious to the privileges of this House than such quotations by ministers of the private opinions of their colleagues—and especially if those colleagues are deceased. Why, we are so punctilious on these matters that a minister is not even permitted to quote from a despatch without laying it upon the table. There would be an end to all freedom and force of discussion if it were in the power of a minister to get up and say: ‘You have taken such and such a view of affairs, but your facts are wrong,’ and thus to carry away the House by some declaration of which we had no proof whatever. Everyone must feel that we cannot be too rigid in the application of our rules on such matters; and even if the right honourable gentleman was convinced that these were the private opinions of Lord Clarendon and of Lord Palmerston, he was not justified in referring to the private conversations of ministers who are since dead.

I am not here to vindicate the honour either of Lord Clarendon or of Lord Palmerston. There are those in this House connected with Lord Clarendon by blood, and who, moreover, resemble him in his capacity of conducting public affairs. An eminent relative of Lord Clarendon has a seat in this House, and upon him should devolve the duty of defending the noble earl’s memory from such misstatements.

Nor am I here to vindicate the honour of Lord Palmerston; but I may make one observation with regard to that distinguished man, because it may throw some little light on these painful disclosures which have agitated and surprised so many persons. We have also had it stated in 'another place' that Lord Palmerston made some light observation to a diplomatist who spoke to him on the subject of our policy with regard to the Black Sea. Now, everybody who knew Lord Palmerston well, knew this of him—that with a smiling countenance he often evaded inconvenient discussions on serious affairs. Lord Palmerston was a man who, when most serious, availed himself very often of the weapon of banter; and not merely the diplomatist in question—and I do not seek to inquire who he is—but many diplomatists, if they would only acknowledge it, would confess that when they have wearied Lord Palmerston with their grave assiduity, or have attempted to pump Lord Palmerston with their practised adroitness, he has often unsheathed his glittering foil and has soon disarmed and disabled inconvenient opponents. Lord Palmerston was a master of banter, and disliked discussion of grave matters when not in his cabinet or in this House. But I cannot refrain from recording my solemn conviction that the policy of Lord Palmerston with respect to maintaining the neutrality of the Black Sea never wavered for a moment, and that nothing but securing that great condition of the Treaty of Paris would have reconciled him to the comparative leniency of the other terms.

Now, Sir, I hope I have vindicated myself from the charge that I was not authorised in the description which I gave the first night of the session, of the importance of the neutrality of the Black Sea; that I was not justified in saying that it was the cardinal principle of the settlement of 1856; that these were the opinions of Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Russell; that they broke up the negotiations at Vienna; and that the war was renewed, or rather continued, solely with the view to maintain that condition. I think I have shown that the policy then adopted by Her Majesty's Government was the policy not only of Lord Clarendon, but that it must

also have been that of Lord Granville up to a very recent period. Now, Sir, I have only one observation to make upon the Conference. Why a Conference was called is to me a matter difficult to comprehend, and I hope we shall learn clearly to-night what its object is. I think myself that, under any circumstances, a Conference would have been a mistake. But if the Conference had been called to vindicate the honour and the rights of England and of Europe, I should have thought it, though a hazardous, at least a bold and loyal course. But why a Conference should be called—a Conference which Russia did not require—for Russia only really initiated an abstract outrage of public morality, and only theoretically violated a treaty, and therefore it was quite unnecessary to do anything, even if you felt you were not prepared to resist her when she put her policy into practice—I say why, under such circumstances, a Conference should be called merely to register the humiliation of our country passes my understanding.

But there was one declaration made by the Secretary of State¹ which may, perhaps, have some light thrown upon it by that consummate master of language² who has several times contradicted me in the course of this speech, and who will very likely follow the same course when he rises on his legs. The declaration was made by a Secretary of State who was at one time ready to go to war with or without allies, but whose policy changes in a moment, and the policy being changed, a satisfactory and plausible reason is offered to the British people. The Conference is to be held, but upon this understanding—there is to be ‘no foregone conclusion’³ on the subject. That statement was generally accepted. What was the weight and value of that condition I will not now attempt to ascertain; but, at any rate, it meant something. If it was not to influence events, still there was a semblance of dignity about it. And now, if the Conference was to be held without any foregone conclusion by any of the Powers upon the question of the neutrality of the Black Sea, I want to know how the right honour-

¹ Lord Granville.

² Mr. Gladstone.

³ Words used by Lord Granville at the Conference, Jan. 17, 1871. They are to be found in the first Protocol.

able gentleman reconciles that position with the statement he made the first night that Parliament met, in which he proved that there was a foregone conclusion—a foregone conclusion in the mind of the Prime Minister, and that, a foregone conclusion against the honour and interests of his country?

BULGARIAN ATROCITIES. August 11, 1876.

[In the summer of 1875 disturbances broke out in the province of Bosnia and in the Herzegovina occasioned by the exactions of the tithe farmers. News reached this country in the following year that great outrages had been committed by the Turkish soldiers in the suppression of the insurrection. And on April 10 Mr. W. E. Forster asked Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons whether it was true 'that a large number of Bulgarian girls had been sold publicly as slaves, and also that a very large number of Bulgarians were then undergoing torture in prison.' Mr. Disraeli, in the course of his reply, said he doubted whether many prisoners were undergoing torture, as the Turks were an Oriental people, who 'generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner.' This sentence was imputed to him as 'levity,' and was made the foundation of many most impassioned attacks. On August 11 the subject was renewed by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, when Mr. Disraeli spoke as follows:—]

SIR,—The honourable gentleman the member for Poole (Mr. Evelyn Ashley) has called attention to an important and interesting subject to-night in a manner very irregular, I think, not to say unprecedented. If the honourable gentleman really believes that the conduct of Her Majesty's Government with respect to these transactions and of the Queen's ambassador is deserving of censure and disapprobation, I think he ought to have come forward with a distinct motion on the subject. Although we are on the point of prorogation, he knows enough of me to know that my advice to the Sovereign would be not to prorogue Parliament if he desired to challenge our policy; and even in a House like this, if he had given notice, the opinion of the House of Commons might be taken about it. It appears to me to be a course scarcely, I should think, pleasant to a man of a mind such as I believe is possessed by the honourable gentleman, to avail him-

self of a parliamentary privilege, which I do not care to admit or deny, to insinuate an offensive opinion upon the advisers of the Crown and upon the conduct of absent ambassadors, when he knows we have no means, in the present state of affairs, of testing the opinion of Parliament or of the country upon the subject. Let me at once place before the House what I believe is the true view of the circumstances which principally interest us to-night, for after the Rhodian eloquence to which we have just listened, it is rather difficult for the House to see clearly the point which is before it. The Queen's ambassador at Constantinople, who has at all times no easy duty to fulfil, found himself at the end of April and in the first three weeks of May in a position of extreme difficulty and danger. Affairs in Constantinople never had assumed—at least in our time, certainly—a more perilous character. It was difficult to ascertain what was going to happen. But that something was going to happen, and something of a character which might disturb the relations of the Porte with all the Powers of Europe, and might even bring about a revolution, the effect of which would be felt in distant countries, there was no doubt. The House is well acquainted with the train of strange incidents which occurred, all of them events that tried the intelligence, the vigilance, and the thought of our ambassador there to the utmost, and, in circumstances of great difficulty, I think he showed an intelligence, a courage, and a calmness which were highly beneficial to the course of public affairs. The honourable and learned gentleman who has just addressed us in so learned and powerful an oration (laughter), well, I speak what I feel, I look upon him as one of the chief orators of the House—although he sometimes lurches, as he has done on this occasion, his great powers upon subjects which are not quite adequate to the treatment. In the present instance the honourable and learned gentleman has made one assumption throughout his speech—that there has been no communication whatever between the Queen's ambassador at Constantinople and Her Majesty's ministers upon the subject in discussion, that

* From Sir W. Harcourt who had just sat down. The Rhodian school of rhetoric was more florid than the Attic.

we never heard of these affairs until the newspapers published accounts, which were brought under the notice of both Houses of Parliament, and from that assumption he draws all those inferences so flattering to Her Majesty's Government which have been recently communicated to the House.

The state of the facts is the reverse. From the very first period that these transactions occurred—from the very commencement—the ambassador was in constant communication with Her Majesty's Government. (No, no!) Why, that may be proved by the papers on the table. Throughout the months of May and June the ambassador is constantly referring to the atrocities occurring in Bulgaria, and to the repeated protests which he is making to the Turkish Government, and informing Her Majesty's Government of interviews and conversations with the Grand Vizier on that subject.

The honourable and learned gentleman says that when questions were addressed to me in this House I was perfectly ignorant of what was taking place. But that is exactly the question which we have to decide to-night. I say we were not perfectly ignorant of what was taking place, and that is the very point I am now calling attention to. I say, during all this period we were—I will not say daily, but constantly receiving communications from Her Majesty's ambassador informing us of what was occurring in Bulgaria, and apprising the Government of the steps he took to counteract evil consequences. What did take place was this: When certain statements were made in this House we said we were in constant communication with Sir Henry Elliot, and that the information which reached us did not warrant the statements that were made. I agree with my honourable friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bourke), who has on two occasions addressed himself to the subject with great knowledge and ability, that even the slightest estimate of the horrors that occurred in Bulgaria is quite sufficient to excite the indignation of the country and of Parliament; but when you come to say we were ignorant of all that was occurring, and did nothing to counteract it, because we said in answer to questions that the information which had reached us did not warrant the state-

ments that were quoted in the House—these are two entirely different questions; and therefore it becomes us to consider what were the statements made in this House.

In the newspaper which had been referred to, the first account was, if I recollect aright, that 30,000 or 32,000 persons had been slain; that 10,000 persons were in prison. (Mr. W. E. Forster: There is no mention of that in the first statement.) Well, it may have been in the second that it was made. It was also stated that 1,000 girls had been sold in the open market, that forty girls had been burnt alive in a stable, and that cartloads of human heads had been paraded through the streets of the cities of Bulgaria: these were some of, though not all, the statements made, and I was perfectly justified in saying that the information which had reached us did not justify those statements, and therefore we believed them to be exaggerated. Is that fact true, or is it not? Now that we have arrived at a position in some degree to realise the truth of the terrible results that did occur, is the truth most like what we believed to be the case, or that which was brought forward as the foundation of the questions of the right honourable gentleman? I maintain that the statements we made in Parliament were quite justified. Lord Derby telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot a second account; which appeared in the 'Daily News,' stating that in the Tatar-Bazardjik district, six Bulgarian cartloads of heads of women and children were boastfully paraded, and that young women were regular articles of traffic, and were being sold publicly in the villages by Tartars and Turks. Lord Derby added that it was very important that Her Majesty's ministers should be able to reply to the inquiries made in Parliament respecting these and other statements, and directed Sir Henry Elliot to inquire by telegram of consuls, and report as soon as he could. All the statements in this second account are untrue. There never were forty maidens locked up in a stable and burnt alive. That was ascertained with great care by Mr. Baring, and I am surprised that the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford should still speak of it as a statement in which he had confidence. I believe it is an entire fabrication. I believe, also, it is an entire fabrication that 1,000 young women were sold

in the market as slaves. We have not received the slightest evidence of a single sale, even in those journals on which the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford founded his erratic speech.

I have been attacked for saying that I did not believe that it was possible to have 10,000 persons in prison in Bulgaria. So far as I can ascertain from the papers, there never could have been more than 3,000. As to the 10,000 cases of torture, what evidence is there of any case of torture? We know very well there has been considerable slaughter; that there must have been isolated and individual cases of most atrocious rapine, and outrages of a most atrocious kind; but still we have had communication with Sir Henry Elliot, and he has always assumed from what he knew that these cases of individual rapine and outrage were occurring. He knew that civil war was carried on there under conditions of brutality which unfortunately are not unprecedented in that country; and the question is, whether the information we had justified the extravagant statements repeated in Parliament which no one pretends to uphold and defend. We were asked if we had information which justified us in supposing they were authentic. We replied that we were in daily communication with our ambassador, who was in constant communication with consuls, and that nothing which reached us warranted those extravagant statements which nobody now professes to believe. The honourable and learned gentleman kindly excused me for not having seen the report of Consul Reade, on the score of my multifarious duties; but I do not think my multifarious duties are any excuse for the neglect of business, and I can assure the House there is not a despatch which reaches or leaves the country which it is not my intention to see, and I scrupulously fulfil that duty; but it is a remarkable circumstance that that despatch of Consul Reade, through no inadvertence of mine, was forwarded to another person. A delay arose, and it never reached me until ten days after the question was asked. I wish to vindicate myself on that point.

The honourable and learned gentleman has done full justice to the Bulgarian atrocities. He has assumed as absolutely true everything that criticism and more authentic information had

modified, and in some instances had proved not merely to be exaggerations but to be absolute falsehoods. And then the honourable and learned gentleman says, 'By your policy you have depopulated a province.' Well, Sir, certainly the slaughter of 12,000 individuals, whether Turks or Bulgarians, whether they were innocent peasants or even brigands, is a horrible event which no one can think of without emotion. But when I remember that the population of Bulgaria is 3,700,000 persons, and that it is a very large country, is it not a most extravagant abuse of rhetoric to say that the slaughter of so considerable a number as 12,000 persons is the depopulation of a province? Well, but then the honourable and learned gentleman makes a severe attack upon the honourable gentleman the Under Secretary of State, because he referred as an authority to the '*Levant Herald*.' Now the '*Levant Herald*' is a newspaper which, I believe, is of considerable authority, and is distinguished for its authentic information. That article in the '*Levant Herald*' I may not have read with all the critical acumen of the honourable and learned member for Oxford, but certainly, as I read it, there were many points which I felt as I went on were substantiated by official papers, the whole of which I believe are now on the table of the House. And I cannot understand how it is that those who are so ready sometimes to exaggerate the importance of newspaper communications, and to assert, as two honourable gentlemen members of the late Government have done this evening, that they are more authentic than diplomatic despatches, should say that the '*Daily News*' should be such an absolutely infallible authority upon those matters, and that the '*Levant Herald*' should be flouted and treated with all the scorn which the honourable and learned member for Oxford has poured upon it. I cannot see why the information of the '*Levant Herald*' is to be treated in that manner. It is to be weighed fairly. Its statements are not to be accepted without adequate consideration, but I do not place it, as regards having confidence in its information, lower than any other newspaper. And I have always heard—I know it was so in old times. I do not know myself if it be so at present—that it was an authority much looked up to, and I have never heard anything about it.

management or character to give any reason to treat its authority with contempt. But when I find its statements agree and tally with the statements in the published despatches, I naturally say that it gives me a prejudice in favour of its veracity. ('Oh, oh!') And I have no doubt, Sir, that if the 'Levant Herald' were to publish some evidence to-morrow which would tell in favour of the views of the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford, or the honourable and learned gentleman the member for Oxford, we should have that journal held up as containing infallible proof of the fact, and who should dare attempt to depreciate its authority or question its veracity? We should have had nothing but high laudation, instead of the denouncing phrases which fell upon us to-night.

Well, the honourable and learned gentleman said also that Her Majesty's Government had incurred a responsibility which is not possessed by any other country as regards our relations with Turkey and our influence with the Turks.

I say we have incurred no responsibility which is not shared with us by all the other contracting Powers to the Treaty of Paris. I utterly disclaim any peculiar responsibility. He asks, why did we not send a consul to Philippopolis at once? and why did we not at once appoint a military attaché to the Turkish army? Why should we have sent a consular agent to Philippopolis? Why send a military attaché to the Turkish army? To do so does not involve us in any peculiar responsibility—it is only the exercise by Her Majesty of one of her rights and duties. It has nothing to do with treaties or with diplomatic responsibility. Her Majesty has the right to send a consular agent to any place she thinks fit, and she has a right, if the Sovereign of the country agrees to it, to send a military attaché to the armies of the belligerents. The very fact that we were obliged properly to appeal to the Porte for their permission before we appointed General Kemball, shows that it was no intrusion and no undue or unjust interference with the Government of the country, but that we were only fulfilling our duties as an independent State in connection with another independent State; and to attempt to mix up these two simple acts on the part of the Queen with diplomac-

engagements, and responsibility of a peculiar nature arising from those diplomatic engagements, is really to introduce a preposterous element into the debate. I am asked why it is that because we have in August agreed to send a vice-consul to Philippopolis, we did not do so in May? Does anyone believe that if a vice-consul had been sent to Philippopolis in May it would have prevented the disastrous events that have occurred? It is quite impossible to suppose anything of the kind. What we have done now in a place where I am sorry to say we have no commercial relations, will at least lay the basis of some better means of communication in that country, and we should have better communication with Turkey at present if, unfortunately, some years back there had not been a Liberal assault on the consular system which reduced the number of Turkish vice-consuls.

The honourable and learned gentleman told the Government 'There is a question now which you must face, and that question is, why do you stand out as an obstacle to the settlement of a great question from pure jealousy of Russia?'

I should like to know, in the first place, what is this great question to the settlement of which we stand out as an obstacle? The honourable and learned gentleman, although he has seldom had greater command of eloquence, and although he appears to have given the subject great consideration, never told us what the real question was, and when he taunted us so indignantly with being an obstacle to the settlement of this great question, he never ventured to define it, except, indeed, that he did intimate that it was the duty of England, in combination with Russia and the other Powers, to expel the whole Turkish nation from Eastern Europe. That an honourable and learned gentleman,¹ once a member of a Government, and an ornament of that Government, and one who would in future be one of our eminent statesmen, that after having experienced a sense of political responsibility, he should get up on the last day of the session, and with the conviction that from his glowing

¹ Sir W. Vernon Harcourt had been Solicitor General in the previous Government and was Home Secretary in the administration which succeeded Lord Beaconsfield.

and animated words the country might be disturbed for the next six months at least, should counsel as the solution of all these difficulties that Her Majesty's Government should enter into an immediate combination to expel the Turkish nation from Eastern Europe, does indeed surprise me. And because we are not prepared to enter into a scheme so Quixotic as that would be, we are held up by the honourable and learned gentleman and the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford as having given our moral, not to say our material, assistance to the Turkish people and the Turkish Government. We are always treated as if we had some peculiar alliance with the Turkish Government, as if we were their peculiar friends, and even as if we were expected to uphold them in any enormity they might commit. I want to know what evidence there is of that, what interest we have in such a thing. We are, it is true, the allies of the Sultan of Turkey—so is Russia, so is Austria, so is France, and so are others. We are also their partners in a tripartite treaty, in which we not only generally, but singly, guarantee with France and Austria the territorial integrity of Turkey. These are our engagements, and they are the engagements that we endeavour to fulfil. And if these engagements, renovated and repeated only four years ago by the wisdom of Europe, are to be treated by the honourable and learned gentleman as idle wind and chaff, and if we are to be told that our political duty is by force to expel the Turks to the other side of the Bosphorus, then politics cease to be an art, statesmanship becomes a mere mockery, and instead of being a House of Commons faithful to its traditions and which is always influenced, I have ever thought, by sound principles of policy, whoever may be its leaders, we had better at once resolve ourselves into one of those revolutionary clubs which settle all political and social questions with the same ease as the honourable and learned member.

Sir, we refused to join in the Berlin note because we were convinced that if we made that step we should very soon see a material interference in Turkey; and we were not of opinion that by a system of material guarantees the great question

which the honourable and learned gentleman has adverted to, would be solved either for the general welfare of the world or for the interests of England, which after all must be our sovereign care. The Government of the Porte was never for a moment misled by the arrival of the British fleet in Besika Bay. They were perfectly aware when that fleet came there that it was not to prop up any decaying and obsolete Government, nor did its presence there sanction any of those enormities which are the subjects of our painful discussion to night. What may be the fate of the eastern part of Europe it would be arrogant for me to speculate upon, and if I had any thoughts on the subject I trust I should not be so imprudent or so indiscreet as to take this opportunity to express them. But I am sure that as long as England is ruled by English Parties who understand the principles on which our Empire is founded, and who are resolved to maintain that Empire, our influence in that part of the world can never be looked upon with indifference. If it should happen that the Government which controls the greater portion of those fair lands is found to be incompetent for its purpose, neither England nor any of the Great Powers will shrink from fulfilling the high political and moral duty which will then devolve upon them.

But, Sir, we must not jump at conclusions so quickly as is now the fashion. There is nothing to justify us in talking in such a vein of Turkey as has, and is being at this moment entertained. The present is a state of affairs which requires the most vigilant examination and the most careful management. But those who suppose that England ever would uphold, or at this moment particularly is upholding, Turkey from blind superstition and from a want of sympathy with the highest aspirations of humanity, are deceived. What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England. Nor will we ever agree to any step, though it may obtain for a moment comparative quiet and a false prosperity, that hazards the existence of that Empire.

SPEECH ON CALLING OUT RESERVE FORCES. April 8,
1878.

MESSAGE FROM QUEEN.

[By the Treaty of San Stefano, concluded between Russia and Turkey in the spring of 1878, the latter Power was reduced to a cypher in the hands of Russia, and the position of England in the Mediterranean seriously imperilled. Russia was required by the British Government to submit the treaty to a Congress; and her refusal to do so was the signal for Lord Beaconsfield to advise Her Majesty to call out the Reserve Forces.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My lords, in moving an humble address to Her Majesty to thank the Queen for the gracious message which we have recently received from Her Majesty, I think it will not be considered unusual that I should make a few remarks on the circumstances in which that message has been addressed to Parliament. I assure your lordships I shall not ask you to follow me in a narrative of the war which has occurred between Russia and Turkey, or of the course which has been pursued by Her Majesty's Government during that war. When last I had the honour of addressing your lordships on this subject, which was on the occasion of the meeting of Parliament, I said that during that war no noble lord opposite had challenged the policy which we had pursued, and I thought, therefore, I was entitled to assume that the policy on which we had acted had been generally approved, and I believe I may infer from what passed on that occasion that noble lords opposite assented to my statement. But it so happened that at almost the very moment I was then speaking circumstances were occurring which gave quite a new aspect to affairs, and I think that upon those circumstances and upon all the conduct of Her Majesty's Government subsequently to those circumstances

your lordships have a legitimate, constitutional, and Parliamentary right to declare your opinion. With one exception, I will ask your attention only to what has occurred from the moment to which I have been alluding. My lords, before I enter into the details with which I shall have to trouble your lordships, I ask permission to read an extract from an important despatch, which extract it seems to me to be necessary you should have in your minds before you can form an impartial judgment on the statement which I am about to submit to your lordships' House. In that paper, which was an answer to Prince Gortchakoff announcing and vindicating the commencement of the war between Russia and Turkey, the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) argued with great ability the many reasons why we could not agree with His Highness. Having given many reasons for this, the Secretary of State concluded —

‘The course on which the Russian Government has entered involves graver and more serious considerations’ (That is, graver and more serious than those which he had already alleged). ‘It is in contravention of the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856, by which Russia and the other signatory Powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In the Conference of London of 1871, at the close of which the above stipulation with others was again confirmed, the Russian plenipotentiary, in common with those of the other Powers, signed a declaration affirming it to be “an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting parties by means of an amicable arrangement.” In taking action against Turkey on his own part, and having recourse to arms without further consultation with his allies, the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the Europe in concert hitherto maintained, and has at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent.’

My lords, the reply from which I have read that extract is dated May 1, 1877, and it is of the greatest importance that the House should bear in mind that, at the commencement of the

deplorable war which I trust has now ceased, this announcement was so deliberately made and this principle was vindicated in a manner so distinct by Her Majesty's Government. My lords, the extract which I have read conveys the keynote of our policy; it is the diapason of our diplomacy; upon it our policy was founded; and had not those engagements been entered into by Russia, and had we not held her bound by those engagements in the face of Europe, no policy of neutrality would have been sanctioned by this country. I believe, my lords, I may say that not alone for this, but for other countries which adopted the same policy.

Well, since I had the honour of addressing your lordships at the beginning of this session, circumstances which were just then occurring and which continued afterwards have given a new aspect to the state of affairs. Those circumstances were as follow:—About that time Her Majesty's Government received private information that negotiations were commencing or were about to commence between the belligerent Powers. No sooner had that information reached us than the Secretary of State addressed to Her Majesty's ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord A. Loftus, instructions which were as follow, and were dated January 14:—

‘Her Majesty's ambassador has been instructed to state to Prince Gortchakoff that, in order to avoid possible misconception and in view of reports which have reached Her Majesty's Government, they are of opinion that any treaty concluded between the Governments of Russia and the Porte affecting the treaties of 1856 and 1871 must be a European treaty, and would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were parties to those treaties.’

My lords, on January 23, having received no answer from Russia with respect to those representations, the Secretary of State, pressing for an answer, telegraphed in these terms:—

‘Have you received an answer from the Russian Government to the communication which you made on the 15th inst. respecting the validity of any future treaty?’

On January 24, ten days after the original representations,

Her Majesty's ambassador writes to say he had received no answer himself, and adds —

‘I presume Prince Gortchakoff regarded the communication as a statement to record the opinion of Her Majesty's Government which required no answer. If an answer was to be given, it would probably be made through the Russian ambassador in London.’

Accordingly, my lords, on the day after that message was received, Count Schouvaloff read to my noble friend the following extract of a telegram from Prince Gortchakoff —

‘We repeat the assurance that we do not intend to settle by ourselves (*isolement*) European questions having reference to the peace which is to be made (*se rattachant à la paix*).’

Meanwhile, my lords, information reached us that negotiations were now being carried on between Russian and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik, and that those negotiations were being conducted with the utmost secrecy, I may say mystery, which secrecy was held as against those who had religiously and honourably observed that policy of neutrality which had been promised by the Secretary of State. In consequence of this, my lords, on January 29 the Secretary of State addressed the following despatch to Lord A. Loftus —

‘I have to instruct your Excellency to state to the Russian Government that Her Majesty's Government, while recognising any arrangements made by the Russian and Turkish delegates at Kezanlik for the conclusion of an armistice and for the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare that in so far as those arrangements are calculated to modify European treaties and to affect general and British interests they are unable to recognise in them any validity unless they are made the subject of a formal agreement among the parties to the Treaty of Paris.’

At the same time, my lords, the Secretary of State sent the following circular in identical language to Her Majesty's ambassadors at all the Courts of Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. Your lordships will perceive that it contains an additional paragraph, but in other respects is substantially the same as the communication to Lord A. Loftus of January 29.

‘I have to request that your Excellency will inform the Government to which you are accredited that Her Majesty’s Government, while they are prepared to recognise any arrangements which may be made by the Russian delegates and those of Turkey at Kezanlik with a view to the conclusion of an armistice and the settlement of bases of peace as binding between the two belligerents, declare, nevertheless, that in so far as such arrangements may be found calculated to modify European treaties, or to affect general interests or those of Great Britain, they are unable to recognise in them any validity unless they shall be made the subject of a formal agreement by the Powers parties to the Treaty of Paris.

‘Her Majesty’s Government entertain the hope that the view of the case above stated, which is entirely based upon the treaties, and more especially upon the Treaty of London of 1871, will receive the assent of the other Powers who were parties to those treaties.’

At length, my lords, there came the following reply from the Russian Government :—

‘St. Petersburg : January 30, 1878.

‘I have received your lordship’s telegram of yesterday, containing a declaration relative to the question of the validity of the bases of peace, and I have this morning communicated the substance of it to Prince Gortchakoff. His Highness replied that to effect an armistice certain bases of peace were necessary, but they are only to be considered as preliminaries, and not definitive as regarded Europe. His Highness stated categorically that questions bearing on European interests will be concerted with European Powers, and he had given Her Majesty’s Government clear and positive assurances to this effect.’

Those positive assurances were repeated in communications made by the Russian ambassador to this country; and I am bound to say, as so many remarks have been made on the conduct of that plenipotentiary, that I believe he has made no representations to Her Majesty’s Government which are not to be found in the instructions which he received from his own Government.

Well, my lords, this carried us through the month of

January, the month in which Parliament assembled, the month in which those negotiations between Russia and Turkey commenced, and the month in which was received that declaration from Prince Gortchakoff which Her Majesty's Government was induced to regard as satisfactory. And that it was deemed satisfactory by the Government of Austria also I think there can be no doubt, because on February 4 a formal invitation was received by Her Majesty's Government from the Government of Austria to a Conference to be held at Vienna. That communication was made with the knowledge of Russia, or, to use the language of a despatch of the Austrian ambassador, Russia 'fully appreciated it,' and the object of the Conference was stated to be the establishment of 'a European agreement as to the modifications which it might become necessary to introduce in existing treaties,' in order to make them harmonise with the present situation. Your lordships will observe the character in which this Government, the Government of Austria, and the other Governments were to take part in the Conference. Avowedly, it was in her character as a signatory of the treaties of 1856 that Austria addressed the invitation to the other Powers, and it was in their character as signatories of those treaties that the other Powers received that invitation. That carried us to the commencement of February, and the month which follows is not rich in diplomatic documents. But, my lords, it was not an uneventful month. During the whole of that period Austria was busy in conferring with the different Courts of Europe and in making arrangements for the meeting of the Conference. There was the scheme of its meetings at Vienna; there was the objection of some of the Powers to the meeting being held in a capital city. There were discussions as to the presidency, as to the locality, and as to the name of the assembly, as to whether it should be held in a capital city or in a place of more obscure character, as to whether it should be called a Conference or a Congress, and as to whether it should be presided over by a Secretary of State or by some other minister. All those questions occupied the minds of Governments, but they did not occupy the minds of Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government never made the

slightest objection. There were persons proposed whom we might not have approved as the best president; there were localities proposed which, perhaps, we did not approve as the best; but we never made any objection of the kind. We thought too much of the interests of peace and of the magnitude of the considerations involved in a meeting of a Conference or Congress; so that whether it was to be a Conference or a Congress, or whether it was to be held at Vienna, as originally proposed, or at Baden, or at Berlin, or who was to preside over it were matters which Her Majesty's Government put on one side, because we were anxious that there should be such a meeting, believing that by it a means of securing the peace of Europe might be obtained.

My lords, an invitation arrived from Austria to a Congress at Berlin, the objection to a capital city having, it appears, been waived. Well, we stated without a moment's delay that we would accept it, and we did not for a moment ask why Berlin should be preferred to Vienna. All we wanted was that there should be such a meeting; but mindful as we were of the events which had been occurring during the month of February when Austria was carrying on those negotiations, remembering that during the whole of that time secret negotiations were being carried on between Russia and the Porte, remembering the fact that during the whole time while those secret negotiations were proceeding the Russian army was advancing, and, if not occupying, encircling the capital of Turkey, and remembering that we had felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send a portion of the fleet to the Dardanelles, we considered it was of importance when we assented to attending a Congress at Berlin that the policy of Her Majesty's Government should be stated in an unmistakable form, and the Secretary of State on March 4, while agreeing to that proposition, expressed to Count Beust the views of Her Majesty's Government in these terms:—

‘Her Majesty's Government, however, consider that it would be desirable to have it understood in the first place that all questions dealt with in the treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subjects to be discussed in

the Congress, and that no alteration in the condition of things previously established by treaty should be acknowledged as valid until it has received the assent of the Powers.'

I think, my lords, I have shown you that in the eventful month that elapsed from the time to which I before alluded, Her Majesty's Government were consistently maintaining that great principle which they had vindicated before the war commenced, which they had repeated on other occasions, and which on this occasion, when the meeting of the Congress appeared to be settled upon generally, they felt it their duty to again affirm in the terms I have just read to the House. A day or two afterwards—in consequence, probably, of some rumours which may have reached us or of some slight indications of feeling which it was impossible to record, but which the observant critic would not fail to remark—the Secretary of State wrote in this language to Her Majesty's ambassador at Vienna —

'I have to request your Excellency to inform Count Andrassy that, in order to avoid any misapprehensions as to the meaning of their recent declaration contained in my note to Count Beust of the 9th inst., Her Majesty's Government desire to state that they must distinctly understand, before they enter into Congress, that every article in the treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers and what do not.'

Now, my lords, after some slight delay, we received a memorandum from Prince Gortchakoff which was communicated by Lord A. Loftus on March 17.

'In answer to the communication by Lord Augustus Loftus of the despatch in which Lord Derby has answered the proposal of Count Beust respecting the meeting of a Congress at Berlin, I have the honour to repeat the assurance which Count Schouvaloff has already been instructed to give to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty—namely, that the preliminary treaty of peace concluded between Russia and Turkey will be formally communicated to the Great Powers before the meeting of the Congress, and that in the Congress itself each Power will have

the full liberty of its appreciations and of its action (*"la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action"*).'

Now, my lords, I may not, perhaps, be an impartial judge, but I must say that the phrase *'la pleine liberté de ses appréciations et de son action'* was one of which I was not able to form a very clear conception. As to what *'appreciation'* and *'action'* may be, no doubt different interpretations may be furnished. It is a phrase involved in some degree of classical ambiguity. Delphi itself could hardly have been more perplexing and august. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, my lords, Her Majesty's Government could place only one interpretation on that communication. However ambiguous the language of previous despatches, however various the expressions that had been used, there was nothing in the previous correspondence between the two Courts to induce us to assume that there would be a refusal on the part of Russia to that which England believed to be a natural, just, and indispensable condition of her entering into the Congress. We are to understand by implication that now for the first time there was ground for that assumption. My lords, let me make one or two remarks on the character of this treaty of San Stefano which Her Majesty's Government felt so necessary to be submitted to the Congress, and which we believed—and I think we believed so in common with the other Powers—Russia was bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871 to submit to the Congress. (Hear, hear.) The treaty is in your lordships' hands, and, therefore, I will not enter into a minute criticism of its every article; but it is necessary that I should put before your lordships some of its provisions, because, unless they be clear in your lordships' minds, you would hardly be in a position to impartially decide as to the consequences to which the treaty would lead, and as to the course which in respect of it Her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to pursue.

The treaty is one of twenty-seven or twenty-nine articles, and, with the exception of a merely technical one, every one of them is a deviation from the articles of the treaties of 1856 and 1871. I do not say that every article of the treaty of San Stefano would be a violation of the treaties of 1856 and 1871,

because that would be a hard phrase. If the Government of Russia were prepared, as we believed they were prepared, to place the treaty of San Stefano before the Congress, I should look at the deviations between the treaty of San Stefano and the treaties of 1856 and 1871, not as violations, but rather as suggestions of the Russian Government to be laid before the Congress in order that they might be considered, and, if just, be adopted by the other Powers of Europe. But let us look at what this treaty does—this treaty which was negotiated in such secrecy and encircled in mystery to such a degree that the Porte was commanded by Russia not to let a single article of it be known to the neutral Powers, without whose neutrality she could not have gained the advantages she enjoyed, and which would not have been shown unless it had been believed that, as regarded the other Powers, Russia would feel bound by the treaties of 1856 and 1871. Well, my lords, the treaty of San Stefano completely abrogates what is known as Turkey in Europe, it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, it creates a large State which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarians. This Bulgaria goes to the shores of the Black Sea and seizes the ports of that sea, it extends to the coast of the Aegean and appropriates the ports of that coast. The treaty provides for the government of this new Bulgaria, under a prince who is to be selected by Russia, its administration is to be organised and supervised by a commissary of Russia, and this new State is to be garrisoned, I say for an indefinite period, but at all events for two years certain, by Russia.

My lords, it is not merely this vast district, this vast space of country, which is taken from the Porte for which the power and the government of Russia is substituted by the stipulations in this treaty, but for the distant provinces of Bosnia, and Epirus, and Thessaly there are instituted new laws which are to be revised by Russia and afterwards supervised by Russia, so that we say all the European dominions of the Ottoman Porte are taken from the Porte and put under the administration of Russia. My lords, it is not difficult to see that the effect of all the stipulations combined, will be to make the Black Sea as

much a Russian lake as the Caspian. The harbour of Batoum, which is still in possession of the Porte, is seized by Russia, all the strongholds in Armenia are seized by Russia, and the portion of that great province nominally left to Turkey, will be governed by law supervised by Russia. The next point which I feel it necessary to bring under the consideration of your lordships, is that of the claim of Russia to the district of Bessarabia, of which she was deprived after the Crimean War. My lords, I need not recall to your recollection the distressing circumstances which are now arriving and which have arrived with reference to that portion of the treaty of San Stefano; but I want to point out to your lordships that here it is not a matter of trifling or local interest which is at stake. The clause in the Treaty of Paris with regard to the cession of Bessarabia was one on which Lord Palmerston placed the utmost stress, and to which he attached the very greatest importance. It involved the emancipation of the Danube, and, accordingly, Lord Palmerston treated it as an article, not of local, but of European interest. It was inserted in the original preliminaries of the treaty, and an attempt was made by Russia to evade it; but Lord Palmerston attached such importance to it that the Congress of Paris was nearly breaking up because of the efforts made not to have that article carried into effect.

The great interest felt at the Congress of Paris in taking security against the closing of those seas and the closing of the Danube, is a matter which your lordships will bear in mind when examining the treaty of San Stefano. The large European commerce which is now carried on from Trebizond to Russia and Central Asia may be stopped at the pleasure of Russia in consequence of cessions in Kurdistan. But what would be the consequence of the treaty if carried out with reference to the navigation of the Straits? By that treaty the Sultan of Turkey is reduced to a state of absolute subjugation to Russia, and, either as to the opening of the navigation of the Black Sea or as to all those rights and privileges with which the Sultan was invested as an independent sovereign, he would be no longer in the position in which he was placed by the European treaties. We therefore protest against an

arrangement which practically would place at the command of Russia, and Russia alone, that unrivalled situation and its resources which the European Powers placed under the government of the Porte

Now, my lords, this treaty was signed on March 3, but it was not delivered to Her Majesty's Government till March 23. I do not say that during the interval we had not by extraordinary means obtained some knowledge of its provisions, but that was knowledge on which we could not absolutely rely, it was knowledge which, like all knowledge acquired in that way, was likely to be in some degree erroneous, but, at all events, it allowed us to avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of endeavouring to avert what we conceived to be mischievous results to all Europe. My lords, we still hoped and still believed that a Congress might be obtained, and we looked to it as the only means by which the unsatisfactory state of public affairs might be remedied. We were prepared, if all the Powers entered into the Congress, and if it were a *bonâ fide* Congress, and in accordance with the positive engagements as we believed of Russia—we were prepared, I say, to see the treaty of San Stefano submitted to discussion by that Congress in order that, to use the words of the Austrian Government, a *règlement définitif* of the conditions of future peace might be arrived at.

It appeared to us that the circumstances of the world were not unfavourable to that. All the Great Powers of Europe during the last ten years, except England, unfortunately for them, had been involved in fearful wars, and were suffering from the exhaustion attendant on such wars, and we believed that, with the general and natural inclination for peace arising from such circumstances, the discussions of a Congress, carried on as a European Congress would be, would prove favourable to a satisfactory solution of difficulties. And, my lords, we, as far as we were concerned, had a due consideration for the circumstances in which Russia was placed, in consequence of the war between her and Turkey, because we could not expect that Russia would appear at the Congress merely in the same character as she assumed when she became a signatory to the treaties of 1856 and 1871. We were prepared to consider the events that had

occurred ; but, having regard to the temper with which we expected that the proposals of Russia would be considered, we believed that Russia would not disappoint the other Powers. We regarded it as being for her own advantage to comply with the engagements into which she had entered, and that, acting as she had agreed to act by the treaties of 1856 and 1871, she would have placed before the Congress the stipulations of all the articles of the treaty.

My lords, you have heard from me in my previous narrative how these hopes were disappointed. My lords, it was when these hopes were disappointed, and when we found there was no chance by the aid of treaties or by the public law of Europe to bring about a settlement of those great affairs, that we had to consider what was our duty. My lords, the Congress could not meet after that refusal on the part of Russia to conform to her engagements under previous treaties, and the conditions which England put forward when the treaty of San Stefano was placed before the European Powers were conditions which she could never relinquish. The justice of them has been universally acknowledged. It is not denied even by Russia. What, then, was the state of affairs? No Congress was to meet, and a most important portion of Eastern Europe and a considerable portion of Western Asia were either occupied by an invading army or were in a state of actual rebellion. It was impossible to say what might not occur in circumstances of such difficulty and distress. My lords, the country in which these events were occurring is a country which has always been subject to strange and startling vicissitudes. In the East there is only one step between collapse and convulsion, and it was possible that with the British fleet in the Dardanelles, the chief highway between Europe and Asia might be seized, and that the commercial road from Trebizond to Persia might be stopped.

We know that, if not in the memory of the present generation, certainly in the memory of some members of your lordships' House, armies marched through Syria and through Asia without firing a shot, and held Constantinople in a state of trepidation. Why not march armies in the same way and hold

Egypt and the Suez Canal in the same state of trepidation as Constantinople and the Bosphorus was held at that time? In those circumstances, there was, in our opinion, only one course to take. When everything was unsettled; when there was no prospect of a settlement; when there seemed no probability of the treaty of Sin Stefano being submitted for discussion to the European Powers, and of the public law being vindicated; when all Europe was armed, was England to be disarmed? Was England to be deterred from doing her duty to herself and to Europe by taunts and threats—because we were told that we were menacing when we thought to conciliate? My lords, our fleet, which has reached the waters of the Dardanelles, has acted in a manner worthy of it, and in the manner it might have been expected to act; but I have always thought that when it is found necessary to show our strength, certainly England should not be limited to one of her services—that she should appeal to her military force to maintain her honour and her interests, as well as to her marine.

Well, my noble lords, in those circumstances we felt it our duty to advise Her Majesty to send the message to your lordships' House the answer to which I am about to propose. (Cheers) And here let me make one remark upon the act of the Sovereign in that particular. It is the first time the Sovereign of this country has sent down such a message to Parliament, because this message is in virtue of an Act of Parliament which was passed only a very few years ago. That Act was in consequence of a great military reform, which was inaugurated by the last Government, and particularly by the noble viscount (Viscount Cardwell) opposite. My lords, that great military reform gave rise to much controversy and opposition in the country; but, as has been the case in respect of all great Acts of our legislature, when it became law every man on both sides exerted himself to carry it into effect. I am sure that during the experience of the present Government—and that has not been a short one—there has been an unceasing effort to carry into effect the measures and policy of the noble viscount opposite. I feel at liberty to speak on this point, because it is my lot to differ from many of my friends in this matter. The

great principle which is the foundation of the reserve system—the principle of short service—is one which I have had the honour to support. Well, my lords, it is in consequence of that reform in our military system, and the institution of short service, that we are obliged to recommend Her Majesty to call out our reserves. Under the new military system it was laid down that a battalion in time of war or on active service should consist of not less than 1,000 men. A battalion in time of peace consists of only 500 men, and therefore the machinery of reserves, the arrangement introduced by the noble lord opposite, that there should be with this short service a means by which when men passed through their short service and left their colours they might become, under another title, the soldiers of Her Majesty, was the only means by which you could convert our battalions of 500 men, in case of emergency, into battalions of 1,000 men, who should not be mere raw recruits.

Now, unfortunately, the name for this force is not a very felicitous one; it is called the Reserve Force, and it is called the Militia Reserve Force, and the world associates with the word ‘reserves’ some resource that is left to the last, that is only to be appealed to in great emergency, and is to be the ultimate means by which you can effect your purpose. But this is exactly the reverse of what the reserve force instituted by the noble lord opposite is. It is not the last resource, but it is the first resource under our system. At this moment you really cannot put a *corps d’armée* into the field in a manner which would satisfy the country, unless Her Majesty was advised that the circumstances justified such a message to the House from the Crown as I brought up the other day. Well, my lords, if it was necessary in this state of Europe that Her Majesty should have a sufficient naval and military force, we could take no step but that which we advised the Crown to adopt. And what was the consequence of this step? Her Majesty will be able in a very brief space of time to possess an army of 70,000 men fairly and even completely disciplined. It is double the force of Englishmen that Marlborough or Wellington ever commanded; but it is not a force sufficient to

carry on a great war. If England is involved in a great war our military resources are much more considerable than those you may put in motion by this statute; but it is the only way in which you can place at the disposal of the Crown a considerable and adequate force when the circumstances of the country indicate an emergency.

The noble lord the leader of the Opposition the other night, in his lively and satisfactory answer to one of his own supporters, admitted and approved the satisfactory state in which the country was with regard to defence. He said:—‘We happen to know from the Secretary of State that he has a *corps d’armée* ready, and that in a short time he can have another.’ These make up the 70,000 men of whom I speak, and therefore the noble lord admitted it was not an unreasonable amount of force we were calling upon Parliament to grant. The question, therefore, between us and the noble lord is this—I will not say between the noble lord and us, but between us and any who differ from the policy of the Government in this respect—are the circumstances that exist in the East of Europe at this moment—do the circumstances that prevail in the Mediterranean constitute an emergency which justifies the demands that Her Majesty shall not only have a powerful navy in these waters, but shall command, if necessary, not a very considerable, but an adequate and an efficient army? Now, my lords, I would say that this is a question which comes home to every man’s bosom. I cannot conceive myself that in the position in which this country now finds itself, when an immense revolution in an important portion of the world has occurred—a revolution which involves the consideration of some of the most important interests of this country, and, I may say, even the freedom of Europe—I say I cannot conceive that any person who feels a sense of responsibility in the conduct of affairs could for a moment pretend that, when all are armed, England alone should be disarmed.

I am sure my noble friend,¹ whose loss I so much deplore, would never uphold that doctrine, or he would not have added the sanction of his authority to the meeting of Parliament and

¹ Lord Derby

the appeal we made to Parliament immediately for funds adequate to the occasion of peril which we believed to exist. No, I do not think such things of him; and to the individual of whom I did I should say, *Naviget Anticyram*; only I trust, for heaven's sake, that his lunacy would not imperil the British Empire. I have ever considered that Her Majesty's Government, of whatever party formed, are the trustees of that Empire. That Empire was formed by the enterprise and energy of your ancestors, my lords; and it is one of a very peculiar character. I know no example of it, either in ancient or modern history. No Cæsar or Charlemagne ever presided over a dominion so peculiar. Its flag floats on many waters; it has provinces in every zone, they are inhabited by persons of different races, different religion, different laws, manners, customs. Some of these are bound to us by the ties of liberty, fully conscious that without their connection with the metropolis they have no security for public freedom and self-government; others are bound to us by flesh and blood and by material as well as moral considerations. There are millions who are bound to us by our military sway, and they bow to that sway because they know that they are indebted to it for order and justice. All these communities agree in recognising the commanding spirit of these islands that has formed and fashioned in such a manner so great a portion of the globe. My lords, that Empire is no mean heritage; but it is not a heritage that can only be enjoyed; it must be maintained, and it can only be maintained by the same qualities that created it—by courage, by discipline, by patience, by determination, and by a reverence for public law and respect for national rights. My lords, in the East of Europe at this moment some securities of that Empire are imperilled. I never can believe that at such a moment it is the Peers of England who will be wanting to uphold the cause of this country. I will not believe for a moment but that you will unanimously vote the address in answer to the message which I now move. The motion was as follows:—

‘That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty,

thanking Her Majesty for her most gracious message, communicating to this House Her Majesty's intention to cause the Reserve Force and the Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as Her Majesty should think necessary, to be forthwith called out for permanent service'

BERLIN TREATY.

Speech in House of Lords July 18, 1878, after the return from Berlin.

[The calling out of the Reserves in the month of April had been followed by the still more vigorous step of bringing up to Malta a division of our Indian army. The right of the Crown to employ Indian troops on this service had given rise to the most animated debates of the session in both Houses, in which, however, Lord Beaconsfield took only a subordinate part. But, right or wrong on constitutional grounds, the measure seems to have been eminently successful on diplomatic ones. Russia at once began to lower her pretensions, and agreed eventually to the demands of England that the treaty of San Stefano should be entrusted to a European Congress. Early in June Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury went out as the English plenipotentiaries to the Congress of Berlin. They arrived in London on their return on July 15, and were greeted with an ovation which has not many parallels in our history. Three days afterwards Lord Beaconsfield delivered the following speech in the House of Lords, which was crowded before five o'clock to listen to the great orator and successful diplomatist. The galleries were thronged with princesses and peeresses, the Princess of Wales being among the number; and everything denoted a degree of interest and enthusiasm which neither the people nor the aristocracy of this country are in the habit of exhibiting. Lord Beaconsfield's contention was that by the Treaty of Berlin we had so modified the treaty of San Stefano, concluded between Russia and Turkey under protest from this country, that we had restored the independence of the Turkish Empire. 'Turkey exists once more!' was the exclamation of Prince Bismarck when the line of the Balkans was secured for her. He further maintained that by the occupation of Cyprus and the superintendence of Asia Minor we had diminished, not increased, our responsibilities. We must, under any circumstances, have resisted a Russian invasion of Asia Minor; and by removing all pretext for such a movement we had in reality reduced the chance of being forced into hostilities in

future Mr Gladstone three years afterwards in paying a tribute to the memory of his deceased rival, singled out this moment as the culminating point of his greatness in the eyes of those who regarded his policy with admiration and he applied to his Berlin triumph the well known words of Virgil—

*Aspice ut ins gnis spoliis Marcellus opimis
Ingredditar victorque viros supereminet omnes*

His subsequent fortunes suggest to us the words of another Latin poet, who said that Marius would have been the greatest and most fortunate man whom either Rome or nature had produced if only his great soul had taken flight—

Quam de Teutonico vellet descendere curru]

MY LORDS, in laying on the table of your lordships' House, as I am about to do, the protocols of the Congress of Berlin, I have thought I should be only doing my duty to your lordships' House, to Parliament generally, and to the country, if I made some remarks on the policy which was supported by the representatives of Her Majesty at the Congress, and which is embodied in the Treaty of Berlin and in the convention which was placed on your lordships' table during my absence

My lords, you are aware that the treaty of San Stefano was looked on with much distrust and alarm by Her Majesty's Government—that they believed it was calculated to bring about a state of affairs dangerous to European independence and injurious to the interests of the British Empire. Our impeachment of that policy is before your lordships and the country, and is contained in the circular of my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in April last. Our present contention is, that we can show that, by the changes and modifications which have been made in the treaty of San Stefano by the Congress of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople, the menace to European independence has been removed, and the threatened injury to the British Empire has been averted. Your lordships will recollect that by the treaty of San Stefano about one half of Turkey in Europe was turned into a State called Bulgaria—a State consisting of myriads of

50,000 geographical square miles, and containing a population of 4,000,000, with harbours on either sea—both on the shores of the Euxine and of the Archipelago. That disposition of territory severed Constantinople and the limited district which was still spared to the possessors of that city—severed it from the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace by Bulgaria descending to the very shores of the *Ægean*; and, altogether, a State was formed, which, both from its natural resources and its peculiarly favourable geographical position, must necessarily have exercised a predominant influence over the political and commercial interests of that part of the world. The remaining portion of Turkey in Europe was reduced also to a considerable degree by affording what was called compensation to previous rebellious tributary principalities, which have now become independent States—so that the general result of the treaty of San Stefano was, that while it spared the authority of the Sultan so far as his capital and its immediate vicinity, it reduced him to a state of subjection to the great Power which had defeated his armies, and which was present at the gates of his capital. Accordingly, though it might be said that he still seemed to be invested with one of the highest functions of public duty—the protection and custody of the Straits—it was apparent that his authority in that respect could be exercised by him in deference only to the superior Power which had vanquished him, and to whom the proposed arrangements would have kept him in subjection.

My lords, in these matters the Congress of Berlin have made great changes. They have restored to the Sultan two-thirds of the territory which was to have formed the great Bulgarian State. They have restored to him upwards of 30,000 geographical square miles, and 2,500,000 of population—that territory being the richest in the Balkans, where most of the land is rich, and the population one of the wealthiest, most ingenious, and most loyal of his subjects. The frontiers of his State have been pushed forward from the mere environs of Salonica and Adrianople to the lines of the Balkans and Trajan's pass; the new principality, which was to exercise such an influence, and produce a revolution in the disposition of the

The first of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This discovery led to a great influx of people into California, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The second was the discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Nevada, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The third was the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1859. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Colorado, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The fourth was the discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Idaho, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The fifth was the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Montana, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The sixth was the discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Wyoming, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The seventh was the discovery of gold in Utah in 1871. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Utah, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The eighth was the discovery of gold in Arizona in 1876. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Arizona, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The ninth was the discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1878. This discovery led to a great influx of people into New Mexico, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union. The tenth was the discovery of gold in Texas in 1880. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Texas, and the state became one of the most populous in the Union.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 was the first of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859 was the second of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Colorado in 1859 was the third of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860 was the fourth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Montana in 1862 was the fifth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869 was the sixth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Utah in 1871 was the seventh of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Arizona in 1876 was the eighth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1878 was the ninth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Texas in 1880 was the tenth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 was the first of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859 was the second of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Colorado in 1859 was the third of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860 was the fourth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Montana in 1862 was the fifth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869 was the sixth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Utah in 1871 was the seventh of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Arizona in 1876 was the eighth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1878 was the ninth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states. The discovery of gold in Texas in 1880 was the tenth of a series of discoveries that led to the great influx of people into the western states.

It is said that the people of California were not aware of the value of the gold they had discovered, and that they were not aware of the value of the gold they had discovered.

and that it was yielded to an imperious demand on the part of one of the Powers represented at the Congress. My lords, I can assure your lordships that there is not a shadow of truth in the statement. I shall show that when the Congress resolved to establish the line of the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey, they felt that there would have been no difficulty, as a matter of course, in Turkey retaining possession of Sofia. What happened was this. The highest military authority of the Turks—so I think I may describe him—was one of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of the Porte—I allude to Mehemet Ali Pasha. Well, the moment the line of the Balkans was spoken of, he brought under the notice of his colleagues at the Conference—and especially, I may say, of the plenipotentiaries of England—his views on the subject, and, speaking as he did not only with military authority, but also with consummate acquaintance with all those localities, he said nothing could be more erroneous than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategic position, and that those who possessed it would immediately turn the Balkans and march on Constantinople. He said that as a strategical position it was worthless, but that there was a position in the Sandjak of Sofia which, if properly defended, might be regarded as impregnable, and that was the pass of Ichtiman. He thought it of vital importance to the Sultan that that position should be secured to Turkey, as then His Majesty would have an efficient defence to his capital.

That position was secured. It is a pass which, if properly defended, will prevent any host, however powerful, from taking Constantinople by turning the Balkans. But, in consequence of that arrangement, it became the duty of the plenipotentiaries to see what would be the best arrangement in regard of Sofia and its immediate districts. The population of Sofia and its district are, I believe, without exception, Bulgarian, and it was thought wise, they being Bulgarians, that if possible it should be included in Bulgaria. That was accomplished by exchanging it for a district in which the population, if not exclusively, are numerically Mahometan, and which, so far as the fertility of the land is concerned, is an exchange highly

to the advantage of the Porte. That, my lords, is a short account of an arrangement which I know has for a month past given rise in Europe, and especially in this country, to a belief that it was in deference to Russia that Sofia was not retained, and that by its not having been retained Turkey had lost the means of defending herself, in the event of her being again plunged into war.

My lords, it has also been said, with regard to the line of the Balkans, that it was not merely in respect of the possession of Sofia that an error was committed, but that the Congress made a great mistake in not retaining Varna. My lords, I know that there are in this assembly many members who have recollection—glorious recollection—of that locality. They will know at once that if the line of the Balkans were established as the frontier, it would be impossible to include Varna, which is to the north of the Balkans. Varna itself is not a place of importance, and only became so in connection with a system of fortifications, which are now to be raised. No doubt, in connection with a line of strongholds, Varna formed a part of a system of defence; but of itself Varna is not a place of importance. Of itself, it is only a roadstead, and those who dwell upon the importance of Varna, and consider that it was a great error on the part of the Congress not to have secured it for Turkey, quite forget that between the Bosphorus and Varna, upon the coast of the Black Sea, the Congress has allotted to Turkey a much more important point on the Black Sea—the harbour of Burgos. My lords, I think I have shown that the charges made against the Congress on these three grounds—the frontiers of the Balkans, the non-retention of Sofia, and the giving up of Varna—have no foundation whatever.

Well, my lords, having established the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey in Europe, the Congress resolved that south of the Balkans, to a certain extent, the country should be formed into a province, to which should be given the name of Eastern Roumelia. At one time it was proposed by some to call it South Bulgaria; but it was manifest that with such a name between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two provinces.

We therefore thought that the province of East Roumelia should be formed, and that there should be established in it a Government somewhat different from that of contiguous provinces where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited. I am not myself of opinion that, as a general rule, it is wise to interfere with a military Power which you acknowledge; but though it might have been erroneous as a political principle to limit the military authority of the Sultan, yet there are in this world other things besides political principles; there are such things as historical facts; and he would not be a prudent statesman who did not take into consideration historical facts as well as political principles. The province which we have formed into Eastern Roumelia had been the scene of many excesses, by parties on both sides, to which human nature looks with deep regret; and it was thought advisable, in making these arrangements for the peace of Europe, that we should take steps to prevent the probable recurrence of such events. Yet to do this and not give the Sultan a direct military authority in the province would have been, in our opinion, a grievous error. We have therefore decided that the Sultan should have the power to defend the barrier of the Balkans with all his available force. He has power to defend his frontiers by land and by sea, both by the passes of the mountains and the ports and strongholds of the Black Sea. No limit has been placed on the amount of force he may bring to bear with that object. No one can dictate to him what the amount of that force shall be; but, in respect to the interior and internal government of the province, we thought the time had arrived when we should endeavour to carry into effect some of those important proposals intended for the better administration of the States of the Sultan, which were discussed and projected at the Conference of Constantinople.

My lords, I will not enter into any minute details on these questions; they might weary you at this moment, and I have several other matters on which I must yet touch; but, generally speaking, I imagine there are three great points which we shall have before us in any attempt to improve the administration of Turkish dominion. First of all—it is most important, and we

have so established it in Eastern Roumelia—that the office of Governor shall be for a specific period, and that, as in India, it should not be for less than five years. If that system generally obtained in the dominions of the Sultan, I believe it would be of incalculable benefit. Secondly, we thought it desirable that there should be instituted public assemblies, in which the popular element should be adequately represented, and that the business of those assemblies should be to levy and administer the local finances of the province. And thirdly, we thought it equally important that order should be maintained in this province, either by a *gendarmerie* of adequate force or by a local militia, in both cases the officers holding their commission from the Sultan. But the whole subject of the administration of Eastern Roumelia has been referred to an Imperial Commission at Constantinople, and this commission, after making its investigations, will submit recommendations to the Sultan, who will issue firman to carry those recommendations into effect. I may mention here, as it may save time, that in all the arrangements which have been made to improve the condition of the subject-masses of Turkey in Europe, inquiry by local commissions where investigation may be necessary is contemplated. Those commissions are to report their results to the chief commission; and, after the firman of the Sultan has been issued, the changes will take place. It is supposed that in the course of three months from the time of the ratification of the Treaty of Berlin the principal arrangements may be effected.

My lords, I may now state what has been effected by the Congress in respect of Bosnia—that being a point on which, I think, considerable error prevails. One of the most difficult matters we had to encounter in attempting what was the object of the Congress of Berlin—namely, to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority—was the condition of some of his distant provinces, and especially of Bosnia. The state of Bosnia, and of those provinces and principalities contiguous to it, was one of chronic anarchy. There is no language which can describe adequately the condition of that large portion of the Balkan peninsula occupied by Rumania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other provinces. Political intrigues, constant

rivalries, a total absence of all public spirit, and of the pursuit of objects which patriotic minds would wish to accomplish, the hatred of races, the animosities of rival religions, and, above all, the absence of any controlling power that could keep these large districts in anything like order : such were the sad truths, which no one who has investigated the subject could resist for a moment. Hitherto, at least until within the last two years, Turkey had some semblance of authority which, though it was rarely adequate, and when adequate, was unwisely exercised, still was an authority to which the injured could appeal, and which sometimes might control violence. But the Turkey of the present time was in no condition to exercise that authority. I inquired into the matter of those most competent to give an opinion, and the result of my investigation was a conviction that nothing short of an army of 50,000 men of the best troops of Turkey would produce anything like order in those parts, and that, were the attempt to be made, it would be contested and resisted, and might finally be defeated.

But what was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the view of strengthening them—what would have been the position of the Porte if it had to commence its new career—a career, it is to be hoped, of amelioration and tranquillity—by despatching a large army to Bosnia to deal with those elements of difficulty and danger ? It is quite clear, my lords, that such an effort at this moment by Turkey might bring about its absolute ruin. Then what was to be done ? There have been before, in the history of diplomacy, not unfrequent instances in which, even in civilised parts of the globe, States having fallen into decrepitude, have afforded no assistance to keep order and tranquillity, and have become, as these districts have become, a source of danger to their neighbours. Under such circumstances, the Powers of Europe have generally looked to see whether there was any neighbouring Power of a character entirely different from those disturbed and desolated regions, but deeply interested in their welfare and prosperity, who would undertake the task of attempting to restore their tranquillity and prosperity.

In the present case you will see that the position of Austria is one that clearly indicates her as fitted to undertake such an office. It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe to ensure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or three times has Austria undertaken such an office. There may be differences of opinion as to the policy on which Austria has acted, or as to the principles of government which she has maintained, but that has nothing to do with the fact that, under circumstances similar to those I have described as existing in Bosnia and the provinces contiguous to it, Austria has been invited and has interfered in the manner I have described, and has brought about order and tranquillity. Austria in the present case was deeply interested that some arrangement should be made. Austria, for now nearly three years, has had upwards of 15,000 refugees from Bosnia, which have been supported by her resources, and whose demands notoriously have been of a vexatious and exhausting character. It was therefore thought expedient by the Congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. My lords, I am the last man who would wish, when objections are made to our proceedings, to veil them under the decision of the Congress, it was a decision which the plenipotentiaries of England highly approved. It was a proposal which, as your lordships will see when you refer to the protocols which I shall lay on the table, was made by my noble friend the Secretary of State, that Austria should accept this trust and fulfil this duty, and I earnestly supported him on that occasion.

My lords, in consequence of that arrangement crises have been roused against our 'partition of Turkey.' My lords, our object has been directly the reverse, our object has been to prevent partition. The question of partition is one upon which, it appears to me, very erroneous ideas are in circulation. Some two years ago—before, I think, the war had commenced, but when the disquietude and dangers of the situation were very generally felt—there was a school of statesmen who were highly in favour of what they believed to be the only remedy,

what they called the partition of Turkey. Those who did not agree with them were those who thought we should, on the whole, attempt the restoration of Turkey. Her Majesty's Government at all times have resisted the partition of Turkey. They have done so because, exclusive of the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject, they believed an attempt, on a great scale, to accomplish the partition of Turkey, would inevitably lead to a long, a sanguinary, and often recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.

These professors of partition—quite secure, no doubt, in their own views—have freely spoken to us on this subject. We have been taken up to a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, and they have said, ‘All these shall be yours if you will worship Partition.’ But we have declined to do so for the reasons I have shortly given. And it is a remarkable circumstance that after the great war, and after the prolonged diplomatic negotiations, which lasted during nearly a period of three years, on this matter, the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, have strictly, and as completely as ever, come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world is to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe. My lords, unquestionably after a great war—and I call the late war a great war, because the greatness of a war now must not be calculated by its duration, but by the amount of the forces brought into the field, and where a million of men have struggled for supremacy, as has been the case recently, I call that a great war—but, I say, after a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the foremost countries of the world—lost provinces; yet is not France one of the great Powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future?

Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey, perhaps, even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not, perhaps, have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces; it is true that his armies have been defeated, it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates, but all that has happened to other Powers. But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not yet been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned. My lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen, feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria on the question of its duration.

My lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your lordships and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the Congress, and particularly against the English plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece. My lords, I think you will find, on reflection, that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English Government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the Congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the Government with any

engagement for the redistribution of territory. That was repeated, and not merely once repeated. The Greek inhabitants, apart from the kingdom of Greece, are a considerable element in the Turkish Empire, and it is of the greatest importance that their interests should be sedulously attended to. One of the many evils of that large Slav State—the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty—was, that it would have absorbed, and made utterly to disappear from the earth, a considerable Greek population. At the Congress the Greeks were heard, and they were heard by representatives of considerable eloquence and ability; but it was quite clear, the moment they put their case before the Congress, that they had totally misapprehended the reason why the Congress had met together, and what were its objects and character. The Greek representatives, evidently, had not in any way relinquished what they call their great idea—and your lordships well know that it is one which has no limit which does not reach as far as Constantinople. But they did mention at the Congress, as a practical people, and feeling that they had no chance of obtaining at that moment all they desired—that they were willing to accept as an instalment, the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident to the Congress, that the representatives of Greece utterly misunderstood the objects of our labours; that we were not there to partition Turkey, and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose; as far as we could, to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity—of which we have largely availed ourselves—of improving the condition of his subjects.

I trust, therefore, when I have pointed out to your lordships this cardinal error in the views of Greece, that your lordships will feel that the charge made against the Congress has no substantial foundation. But the interests of Greece were not neglected, and least of all by Her Majesty's Government. Before the Congress of Berlin, believing that there was an opportunity of which considerable advantage might be made for Greece without deviating into partition, we applied to the Porte to consider the long-yexed question of the boundaries of the two States.

Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces even than Turkey, perhaps; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not, perhaps, have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces, it is true that his armies have been defeated; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates; but all that has happened to other Powers. But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not yet been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned. My lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen, feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria on the question of its duration.

My lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your lordships, and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the Congress, and particularly against the English plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece. My lords, I think you will find, on reflection, that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English Government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the Congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the Government with any

wise step on the part of the plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty to agree to that decision? That is a question which may legitimately be asked. We might have broken up the Congress and said, 'We will not consent to the retention of these places by Russia, and we will use our force to oblige her to yield them up.' Now, my lords, I wish fairly to consider what was our position in this state of affairs. It is often argued as if Russia and England had been at war, and peace was negotiating between the two Powers. That was not the case. The rest of Europe were critics over a treaty which was a real treaty that existed between Russia and Turkey. Turkey had given up Batoum, she had given up Kars and Ardahan, she had given up Bayazid.

In an examination of the question, then, we must remember that Russia at this moment, so far as Europe is concerned, has acquired in Europe nothing but a very small portion of territory, occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. Well, she naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made. Well, my lords, consider what those conquests are. There was the strong fort of Kars. We might have gone to war with Russia in order to prevent her acquiring Kars and Batoum, and other places of less importance. The war would not have been, probably, a very short war. It would have been a very expensive war—and, like most wars, it would probably have ended in some compromise, and we should have got only half what we had struggled for. Let us look these two considerable points fairly in the face. Let us first of all take the great stronghold of Kars. Three times has Russia captured Kars. Three times, either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then to wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars should have been taken again? Was that an occasion of a *casus belli*? I do not think your lordships would ever sanction a war carried on for such an object and under such circumstances.

Then, my lords, look at the case of Batoum, of which your lordships have heard so much. I should have been very glad if

without shedding the blood of a single Englishman, and if there has been some expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war—for which you were prepared—and well prepared—probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

My lords, I now ask you for a short time to quit Europe and to visit Asia, and consider the labours of the Congress in another quarter of the world. My lords, you well know that the Russian arms met with great success in Asia, and that in the treaty of San Stefano considerable territories were yielded by Turkey to Russia. In point of population they may not appear to be of that importance that they are generally considered; because it is a fact which should be borne in mind that the population which was yielded to Russia by Turkey amounted only to about 250,000 souls, and, therefore, if you look to the question of population, and to the increase of strength in a State which depends on population, you would hardly believe that the acquisition of 250,000 new subjects is a sufficient return for the terrible military losses which inevitably must accrue from campaigns in that country. But although the amount of population was not considerable, the strength which the Russians acquired was of a very different character. They obtained Kars by conquest—they obtained Ardahan—another stronghold—they obtained Bayazid—and the Valley of Alashkerd with the adjoining territory, which contain the great commercial routes in that part of the world. They also obtained the port of Batoum.

Now, my lords, the Congress of Berlin have so far sanctioned the treaty of San Stefano that, with the exception of Bayazid and the valley I have mentioned—no doubt very important exceptions, and which were yielded by Russia to the views of the Congress—they have consented to the yielding of the places I have named to Russia. The Congress have so far approved the treaty of San Stefano that they have sanctioned the retention by Russia of Kars and Batoum. Now the question arises—the Congress having come to that determination—Was it a

dominions of the Sultan in Asia; and, instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvantageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order; and, when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming.

My lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world a peculiar position, which is shared by no other Power. Our Indian Empire is on every occasion on which these discussions occur, or these troubles occur, or these settlements occur—our Indian Empire is to England a source of grave anxiety, and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. In all the questions connected with European Turkey we had the assistance and sympathy sometimes of all, and often of many, of the European Powers—because they were interested in the question who should possess Constantinople, and who should have the command of the Danube and the freedom of the Mediterranean. But when we came to considerations connected with our Oriental Empire itself, they naturally are not so generally interested as they are in those which relate to the European portion of the dominions of the Porte, and we have to look to our own resources alone. There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral Powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great Treaty of Paris, there was the tripartite treaty,¹ which, if acted upon, would have prevented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must clearly perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as far as our Oriental Empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. Now, this was the origin of that Convention at Constantinople which is on your lordships' table, and in that Convention our object was not merely a military or chiefly a military object. Our object was to place this country certainly in a position in which its advice

¹ April 29, 1856, between England, France, and Austria, guaranteeing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

Batoum had remained in the possession of the Turks, on the general principle that the less we had reduced its territory in that particular portion of the globe, the better it would be as regards the prestige on which the influence of the Ottoman Porte much depends there. But let us see what is this Batoum of which you have heard so much. It is generally spoken of in society and in the world as if it were a sort of Portsmouth—whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared with Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London docks, it might hold six, but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense. You cannot increase the port seaward, for though the water touching the shore is not absolutely fathomless, it is extremely deep, and you cannot make any artificial harbour or breakwater. Unquestionably, in the interior the port might be increased, but it can only be increased by first-rate engineers, and the expenditure of millions of capital, and if we were to calculate the completion of the port by the precedents which exist in many countries, and certainly in the Black Sea, it would not be completed under half a century. Now is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia? My lords, we have, therefore, thought it advisable not to grudge Russia those conquests which have been made—especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district.

But it seemed to us the time had come when we ought to consider whether certain efforts should not be made to put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between the Porte and Russia, ending, it may be, sometimes apparently, in comparatively insignificant results, but always terminating with one fatal consequence—namely, shaking to the centre the influence and the prestige of the Porte in Asia, and diminishing its means of profitably and advantageously governing that country. My lords, it seemed to us that as we had now taken, and as Europe generally had taken, so avowedly deep an interest in the welfare of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, the time had come when we ought to consider whether we could not do something which would improve the general condition of the

dominions of the Sultan in Asia; and, instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvantageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order; and, when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming.

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and in which its conduct might at least have the advantage of being connected with a military power and with that force which it is necessary to possess often in great transactions, though you may not fortunately feel that it is necessary to have recourse to that force

Our object in entering into that arrangement with Turkey was, as I said before, to produce tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order were produced, we believed that the time would come when the energy and enterprise of Europe might be invited to what really is another continent, as far as the experience of man is concerned, and that its development will add greatly not merely to the wealth and the prosperity of the inhabitants, but to the wealth and prosperity of Europe. My lords, I am surprised to hear—for though I have not heard it myself from any authority, it is so generally in men's mouths that I am bound to notice it—that the step we have taken should be represented as one that is calculated to excite the suspicion or enmity of any of our allies, or of any State. My lords, I am convinced that when a little time has elapsed, and when people are better acquainted with this subject than they are at present, no one will accuse England of having acted in this matter but with frankness and consideration for other Powers. And if there be a Power in existence to which we have endeavoured to show most consideration from particular circumstances in this matter it is France. There is no step of this kind that I would take without considering the effect it might have upon the feelings of France—a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing. If there could be any step which of all others was least calculated to excite the suspicion of France, it would appear to be this—because we avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt, we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria, and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which involved anything like an acquisition of terri-

tory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hands with suspicion and dislike.

But I must make this observation to your lordships. We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed. But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria, are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, and although I wish to see in the Lebanon and Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world—and especially in Egypt—are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connection with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganisation and want of confidence in the Porte, it comes to this—that if we do not interfere in vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

Now, my lords, I have ventured to review the chief points connected with the subject on which I wished to address you—namely, what was the policy pursued by us, both at the Congress of Berlin and in the Convention of Constantinople? I am told, indeed, that we have incurred an awful responsibility by the Convention into which we have entered. My lords, a prudent minister certainly would not recklessly enter into any responsibility; but a minister who is afraid to enter into any responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent minister. We do not, my lords, wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility; but there is one responsibility from which we certainly shrink; we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a weakened or a diminished Empire. Our opinion is, that the course we have taken will arrest the great evils which are destroying Asia Minor and the equally rich countries beyond.

We see in the present state of affairs the Porte losing its influence over its subjects, we see a certainty, in our opinion, of increasing anarchy, of the dissolution of all those ties which, though feeble, yet still exist and which have kept society together in those countries. We see the inevitable result of such a state of things, and we cannot blame Russia for availing herself of it. But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her—‘Thus far, and no further.’ Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England. Before the circumstances which led to the recent disastrous war, when none of those events which we have seen agitating the world had occurred, and when we were speaking in ‘another place’ of the conduct of Russia in Central Asia, I indicated that conduct, which I thought was unjustly attacked, and I said then—what I repeat now—there is room enough for Russia and England in Asia.

But the room that we require we must secure. We have, therefore, entered into an alliance—a defensive alliance—with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia. We believe that the result of this Convention will be order and tranquillity. And then it will be for Europe—for we ask no exclusive privileges or commercial advantages—it will then be for Europe to assist England in availing ourselves of the wealth which has been so long neglected and undeveloped in regions once so fertile and so favoured. We are told, as I have said before, that we are undertaking great responsibilities. From those responsibilities we do not shrink. We think that, with prudence and discretion we shall bring about a state of affairs as advantageous for Europe as for ourselves, and in that conviction we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the act which we have recommended is one that leads to trouble and to warfare. No, my lords, I am sure there will be no jealousy between England and France upon this subject. In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation in peace.

If that be our first consideration, our next is the development

of the country. And upon that subject I am told that it was expected to-night that I should in detail lay before the House the minute system by which all those results which years may bring about are instantly to be acquired. I, my lords, am prepared to do nothing of the kind. We must act with considerable caution. We are acting with a Power, let me remind the House, which is an independent Power—the Sultan—and we can decide nothing but with his consent and sanction. We have been in communication with that Prince—who, I may be allowed to remind the House, has other things to think about, even than Asia Minor; for no man was ever tried, from his accession to the throne till this moment, so severely as the Sultan has been; but he has invariably during his reign expressed his desire to act with England and to act with Europe, and especially in the better administration and management of his affairs. The time will come—and I hope it is not distant—when my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs may be able to communicate to the House details of these matters, which will be most interesting. But we must protest against being forced into statements on matters of importance, which are necessarily still immature. And we must remember that, formally speaking, even the Treaty of Berlin has not been ratified, and there are many things which cannot even be commenced until the ratification of that treaty has occurred.

My lords, I have now laid before you the general outline of the policy we have pursued, both in the Congress of Berlin and at Constantinople. They are intimately connected with each other, and they must be considered together. I only hope that the House will not misunderstand—and I think the country will not misunderstand—our motives in occupying Cyprus, and in encouraging those intimate relations between ourselves and the Government and the population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are operations of peace and civilisation. We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have

been shown to her and her Government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her Empire. I leave it to the illustrious duke, in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our imperial strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice.

DEFENCE OF MINISTERIAL POLICY IN GENERAL AGAINST THE DUKE OF ARGYLL. May 16, 1879.

[In the middle of the month of May 1879, news reached this country that the evacuation of Turkish territory by Russian troops was all but completed, and that there were other main stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin now on the point of fulfilment. The Duke of Argyll took this opportunity of delivering a general attack upon the whole position of the Government on both the Turkish and the Afghan questions, deriding the Treaty of Berlin as only the treaty of San Stefano in disguise, and accusing the Government of duplicity in their dealings with the Ameer.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: My lords, you are aware, as the noble duke has just reminded you, that at this moment the Ameer of Afghanistan is a self-invited but honoured guest in the English camp, with the avowed object of negotiating a treaty of peace and friendship with the Queen of England, and I may say that under those circumstances, when I heard of the intended motion of the noble duke, and that he was going to call the attention of the House to the results of our foreign policy in Europe and Asia, I think I had some reason yesterday to remind him of that state of affairs to which I have referred, and to leave it with confidence to his discretion, as I left it then, to observe a statesmanlike silence in the circumstances now existing. My lords, I have been deeply disappointed in these expectations. At this very moment, when the questions to which he has referred, such as the appointment of a European resident in the cities of that Sovereign, when those questions are still under consideration, and which at this very moment are the subject of negotiations, the noble duke has thought it proper, referring, as he said, only to the past, to

treat these subjects in a manner—and in a manner which in the present conditions of communication may in twenty-four hours be known in those parts—which certainly may greatly affect the carriage of those negotiations. When I consider these circumstances, when I remember the position of the noble duke, a man of eminence for his ability and so exalted in his position, a man who has more than once been the trusted counsellor of his Sovereign, when I see that such a man as he comes forward, and with a criticism which I will not call malevolent, but which certainly was envenomed, attacks the policy of the Government which at this moment must be being weighed and scanned with the most intense interest abroad, I must say that I am greatly astonished. My Parliamentary experience has not been little, but certainly in the course of that experience I remember no similar instance of a person placed in so high a position adopting the course which the noble duke has thought it right to take.

For the reasons which I gave yesterday I shall certainly not follow the noble duke into the subject to which he has referred. My noble friend, when he addresses your lordships, will find that, although for the moment he may have to sacrifice the gratification of vindicating his personal honour, there are still various matters with respect to Afghanistan to which the noble duke has referred, to which it is necessary for him to allude. I, however, shall not touch upon them. Unfortunately for us, and perhaps still more unfortunately for the noble duke himself, he was not present when the debates in reference to Afghanistan were held. Those of your lordships who were present at those debates can scarcely accept as accurate the picture which the noble duke drew of those discussions. Your lordships have been told by the noble duke that you were obliged to consent to a hurried vote, moved by Her Majesty's Government, who had already committed the country to a certain policy with regard to Afghanistan. Your lordships will recollect that, on the contrary, the subject of the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in reference to Afghanistan was discussed for three nights in this House. Your lordships will also remember that with your indulgence I felt it to be my duty to wind up the

debate upon that occasion, and that, after our policy had been criticised and assailed for three nights, I proved by the production of a despatch written by the late Viceroy of India that if the distinguished leaders of the Opposition had been in office, they would have pursued exactly the same policy which we conceived and which we had the courage to pursue. The result of that debate was that when the matter came to a division one of the largest majorities which we have ever had in this House sealed with its confidence and its approbation the conduct of Her Majesty's Government.

I will endeavour to follow the noble duke through the other subjects which he dealt with in the order in which he introduced them. The noble duke, as some compensation for the attack which he made upon our Indian policy, commenced his address by congratulating us. The noble duke congratulated us upon the great fact that in part fulfilment of the Treaty of Berlin the evacuation of Bosnia and Roumania had been commenced. The noble duke in congratulating us on that circumstance said that it was true at the same time that the version which we now gave of the obligatory provision in the Treaty of Berlin respecting the evacuation of those provinces was not that which we had originally given of it, still that the fact that the evacuation had commenced was so satisfactory that he must congratulate us upon our success in bringing about an agreement under which Russia was to be allowed three more months in which to complete the evacuation. I cannot accept the compliments of the noble duke. I have always placed upon the 22nd clause of the Treaty of Berlin exactly the same interpretation which I understand the Government of Russia now does. My noble friend and myself, who have worked together in these transactions, have, I believe, never differed upon any single point in reference to the treaty except this: I certainly understood that when nine months were appointed for the occupation of these provinces by the military forces of Russia, that period should not include the time allowed for the evacuation of them, which was to commence at the termination of that period of nine months. Occupation and evacuation are different things, and if the evacuation were to be commenced within the nine

months the period of the occupation would be proportionately shortened

But, holding as I do that view of the subject, that is no reason why we should agree to an unreasonable length of time being taken in conducting the evacuation of those provinces. The noble duke treated as a matter of course, and as a subject upon which there could be no possible difference of opinion, that Her Majesty's Government had agreed to extend the time for the evacuation in those provinces to August 3. There is not the slightest authority for any statement of the kind. What we are bound by is the view now taken by the majority of the signatories of the Berlin treaty, to the effect that the evacuation was to commence on May 3, and it is to be completed within a reasonable time, which may be computed in weeks rather than in months, but at all events in a moderate time, as compared with the statement which the noble duke has made. Therefore the noble duke, who prides himself upon his memory, has actually complimented Her Majesty's Government upon the circumstances which, if correct, would have been a disgrace to them.

The noble duke then goes on to complain very much of the manner in which he and his colleagues and friends have been treated not in, but out of this House, and in so doing he exhibited that sensitiveness which I have already more than once observed is peculiar to the present Opposition. On this point I did not think that the evidence of the noble duke was adequate to the occasion. He quoted an extract from a speech of my noble friend, and he also quoted from the anonymous correspondence of an unknown society. When a subject of this character is brought before your lordships on a solemn occasion, and when charges of this nature are made against Her Majesty's Government, I do not myself much care what people say about me, and I have not much time to make remarks about others. Some distinguished members of Her Majesty's Opposition, however, who have appeared in different parts of the country, seem to have spared no time in the preparation of their attacks upon Her Majesty's Government. Upon that subject I will say nothing further than this. I make no charge against either of

the two noble lords the leaders of the Opposition in either House of Parliament. Their conduct has at all times, and especially at critical periods, been such as was to be expected from gentlemen and distinguished statesmen who felt the responsibilities of their position.

That, however, cannot be said of all the members of the party. Although I shall notice nothing of a merely personal nature, I must say that it is much to be regretted that after so solemn an act as the Treaty of Berlin was executed, and when united Europe had agreed to look upon the treaty as some assurance for the maintenance of peace and for the general welfare of the world, certain members of the Opposition should, not once, twice, nor thrice, but month after month, habitually declare to the world that the treaty was utterly impracticable, and have used such external influence as they might possess to throw every obstacle and impediment in the way of carrying that treaty into practical effect. Look at the probable result of such action. If statesmen have pledged their opinion over and over again that a treaty is impracticable, if they become responsible ministers, they will be called upon by those who do not wish the treaty to be fulfilled to carry their opinions into effect.

Then says the noble duke, 'I come now to business. You have negotiated a treaty, but what have you done for Turkey?' And the noble duke for a considerable time—for more than half an hour—made an impassioned appeal to the House, with a view of showing us what ought to have been done for Turkey. From a minister responsible, I believe, for the Crimean War, such a speech might have been expected, and, in fact, the strongest part of the oration of the noble duke was an impassioned argument in favour of going to war with Russia in order to preserve the settlement made at the end of the Crimean War. 'Well,' says the noble duke, 'what have you done? See the losses to Turkey which you have brought about. There is Batoum, a most valuable harbour, which will be fortified by the Russians whatever may be the engagement they have made by the Treaty of Berlin. Do you mean to say, if you had acted with sufficient vigour, that you

could not have prevented Russia taking Bat great fleet in the Black Sea?' Well, no doubt prevented Russia taking Batoum, as we prevent Constantinople. But is the noble duke prepared, to go to war to prevent Russia taking port which with derision the noble duke describes Russia has made a free port. But the noble duke to say that it was not only made by the Treaty port, but a port essentially commercial—was some meaning and by which the signatories of Berlin will always be bound. The noble lord sees what will happen in Batoum. It will be a fortified one. It will be a strong place and a commerce of Persia.' But all this was said in 1828 with regard to the harbour of Poti. The expression was used and England was warned that the harbour of Poti Russia had obtained such position that the Black Sea would be entirely. The noble duke quite forgot to tell us this, Treaty of Berlin the finest port in the Black Sea, Burgas, was restored to the Sultan. This the noble duke is so candid, omitted to bring to your lordships.

'Well,' then says the noble duke, 'how can you yourselves to the fact that you have agreed to the Danubian fortresses—that quadrilateral of fortresses would have commanded the Danube?' One might say from the way in which the noble duke has said that there had never been any war between Turkey and Russia. One would suppose that Turkey had been conquered, and that the army of Russia had been at the gates of Constantinople. Surely the right or wrong, had to be considered. I approve or disapprove the *causa belli*—whatever differences of opinion and similar points—no one would say that Russia had completely vanquished these circumstances that every one would be in the same position as at the

tion which I think your lordships will agree is not a very reasonable one. But look at the merits of the case. These fortresses, under the new system, would have become Bulgarian fortresses, our policy being to maintain the Turkish Empire—a policy, allow me in passing to remind your lordships, which is universal in Europe, because every one of the Great Powers who have signed the Treaty of Berlin agreed in this one point, that there was no substitute for the Turkish power, and that that power, though it might be reduced, should still be substantially maintained. ‘But,’ says the noble duke, ‘the proposal to destroy these fortresses was made by the Russians themselves.’ It matters little, but I believe the noble duke is inaccurate in that respect. The proposal to destroy the fortresses of the Quadrilateral was not a new one. It had been made on previous occasions, and it was always put forward by Russia in order to show that the Russians themselves did not wish to obtain these powerful strongholds.

Then says the noble duke,—‘You have by the Treaty of Berlin, which is but a revised edition of the treaty of San Stefano, established Servia as an independent State and increased its territory!’ But the situation of Servia before the war with reference to its connection with the Porte was one of virtual independence. The Porte certainly was the suzerain and possessed a claim to a very small tribute, but it was in reality a nominal one, for it was never paid. To pretend that the public acknowledgment of the independence of Servia was a great blow to the Turkish power which it was our policy to maintain is really trifling with so serious a subject as that which is now before your lordships. Fourthly, the noble duke says that we have deluded the people, who are, according to him, so easily deceived by the arrangement made concerning Roumelia. The Sultan, according to the noble duke, has no more to do with Roumelia than he has with Roumania itself. But the noble duke forgets the fact that by the Treaty of Berlin the political and military authority of the Sultan is not only asserted, but secured.

It is not simply that he has the right of occupying the Balkan chain; nor is it simply that he has the power of occupy-

ing Burgas, the most important port in the Black Sea. Although we have secured autonomy for Roumelia, and although the Sultan has not yet the blessing of the scheme of local government, which I trust will soon be tried, and which apparently, so far as I can judge, is admirably adapted to the circumstances of the case, his political authority is still asserted. The noble duke forgets the conditions in accordance with which all the officers of the militia and *gendarmerie* must be appointed by the Sultan. Well, these are the different points by which the noble duke has endeavoured to show that as regards the settlement of Berlin the interests of Turkey and of the Sultan have been neglected and injured by Her Majesty's Government. My lords, when the noble duke first gave notice his intention was to call the attention of the House to the results of the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government in Europe and Asia. Well, yesterday we heard from the noble duke that he would not trench upon the future. But how you are to judge of a policy if you are not to treat of the future which will be the result of that policy, I really find some difficulty in ascertaining.

Let us take a larger and more candid view than the noble duke has taken of those important matters of four years' duration in the East. What led to this Treaty of Berlin? It was four years ago, the noble duke reminds us, when certain desires first arose among the border populations of Turkey in Europe. After two months of disaster, during which there were communications between the Powers, there came the famous instrument called the Andrassy Note. That was in December 1875, and was the commencement of those diplomatic campaigns and wars. I am sure your lordships do not wish to hear much about the Andrassy Note, but I believe the noble duke has completely misapprehended the whole situation—the conduct of Her Majesty's Government and the principles on which their policy was established. The Andrassy Note was the very elaborate proposition of a mode of ameliorating the subject populations in European Turkey. Well, the first feeling of Her Majesty's Government was not to accept that note. They remembered their engagements under the Treaty of Paris, and they knew the danger which might occur from again disturbing the settlement

then made. But, my lords, when we investigated that document we found really that the Porte was not called upon to make any concession or to enter into any engagement which they had not by previous *irades* themselves undertaken to concede and to act upon. Well, it is possible that our fear of contributing to the disturbances in Europe might have prevented our even then acceding to that note. But I remember it was at the solicitation of the Porte itself, when it heard that there was a possibility of England holding out, that we ultimately acceded.

I believe, my lords, that after the Andrassy Note there was a *bonâ fide* attempt on the part of the Porte to meet the difficulties of the case. But consider what were the conditions of affairs at that moment. Those disturbances were in the border provinces of the Turkish dominions. The central power was wonderfully relaxed. The provincial administration was incompetent and corrupt. The chiefs in the mountain districts were always at civil war and plundering their neighbours who did not resist them, and in this state of affairs it was that we thought some decided action should be taken, and after a few months a proposition was made in the form of the famous Berlin memorandum, which, if we had agreed to, we should then have joined the other Powers in, in fact, making war upon Turkey. We refused to do that, and Parliament and the country entirely sanctioned the policy we then pursued in declining to accept the Berlin memorandum. My lords, almost simultaneously with the introduction of the Berlin memorandum there occurred the assassination of the European consuls at Salonica. Soon afterwards there was a revolution in Constantinople, the deposition of the Sovereign by force, and other circumstances of the most painful nature, which I need not recall to the recollection of your lordships. Well, after this came the Bulgarian insurrection, and after that the Servian declaration of war against Turkey, which ended in the complete defeat of Servia by Turkey.

Then what did Her Majesty's Government do? It was at that time, when Russia, having interfered in consequence of the prostrate state of Servia, with her *ultimatum*, and by her

menace forced Turkey to make peace, or grant an armistice equivalent to peace with Servia—it was then that Her Majesty's Government came forward with a proposition which became celebrated, and that was to establish autonomy in those provinces which had been so long the scene and theatre of this reckless misgovernment. And then the noble duke says that our conduct has been such that we have necessarily lost the affections and confidence of the then subject races of Turkey. My lords, it was my noble friend on the cross benches¹ who had the honour of making these distinct propositions with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina which were ultimately to be applied to Bulgaria. And let me remind the noble duke, who speaks of us as on all occasions neglecting the interests and not sympathising with the fortunes of the Christian races, that we were the first Government that laid down the principle that the chief remedy for this miserable state of affairs was the introduction of a large system of self government, and above all of the principle of civil and religious liberty.

My lords, I am obliged, on an occasion like the present, to very much curtail remarks which I would wish to place before you, but it is necessary after the speech of the noble duke that I should remove impressions which are absolutely unfounded—that I should recall to your recollection what are the principles on which the policy of Her Majesty's Government is founded, and show your lordships that the noble duke has entirely mistaken that policy. I must point out that the noble duke has imputed to us motives which we never acknowledged, and conduct and feelings toward others which we never shared. Now, has there been any inconsistency in our policy? When war between Russia and Turkey was so imminent that it was a question of hours, my noble friend upon the cross benches proposed that there should be a Conference at Constantinople, at which my noble friend near me should be our plenipotentiary. Has the noble duke, who studies these matters, who not only makes long speeches, but writes long books about them—has the noble duke ever heard, or has he forgotten the instructions given to my noble friend near me by my noble friend on the

¹ Lord Derby

cross benches—instructions as to the course he was to pursue at the Conference at Constantinople?

I cannot, my lords, venture to refer to those instructions which lie before me, at any length; but I may remind you of some of their salient points. In one paragraph my noble friend was instructed that it became requisite in the then crises to take steps by an agreement between the Powers for the establishment of reform in the Turkish provinces which would combine the elective principle with external guarantees for efficient administration. Then the means are indicated by which that state of things might be brought about. Well, my lords, that is but a specimen to show the purport of those instructions, which completely mastered the application of the principle of autonomy; and no Government in Europe at this Conference was so ready, so prepared, or so practical in its propositions by which the welfare of the subject races and a general reform of the administration of Turkey could be affected as was the Government of England, so represented at the Conference by my noble friend. And yet the noble duke comes down here and makes an inflammatory harangue, and speaks of the deplorable consequences which he fears will arise—that we have lost for ever the confidence and affection of the subject races of Turkey by our utter disregard of their feelings and neglect of their interests. Why, my lords, if I were to read to you this minute of my noble friend near me of the proposition which he himself made as regards Montenegro, Servia, the two principalities Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, and the reforms that might be established in all the provinces of Turkey, you would see that at the Conference of Constantinople he endeavoured to have carried into effect as much as he possibly could the policy of autonomy which had been laid down in the instructions prepared by my noble friend on the cross benches.

Well, my lords, you know very well what occurred. We failed—not England only—but Europe failed in preventing war. Our objects were twofold. We wished to maintain Turkey as an independent political State. It is very easy to talk of the Ottoman power being at the point of extinction. But when you come practically to examine the question there is no living

statesman who has ever offered or propounded any practical solution of the difficulties which would occur if the Ottoman Empire were to fall to pieces. One result would probably be a long and general war, and that alone, I think, is a sufficient reason for endeavouring to maintain as a State the Ottoman Empire. But, while holding as a principle that the Ottoman Empire must be maintained as a State, we have always been of opinion that the only way to strengthen it was to improve the condition of its subjects. My lords, I do not say this out of vague philanthropy, or any of that wild sentimentalism which is vomited in the society which is sometimes called political. No, my lords, it was our conviction that that was the only means by which the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire could be secured; and we have acted accordingly.

Until the war commenced we consistently endeavoured—first, to prevent war, and, secondly, to ameliorate the condition of the subject races of the Porte; and when the war took place we determined that when peace was negotiated it should not be negotiated without the knowledge and sanction of Great Britain. We are told, my lords, that the Treaty of Berlin did nothing for the Sultan. Looking to the first object of our policy, which was the maintenance of the Sultan, let me show what our signature to the Treaty of Berlin produced as regards the political position. Bulgaria was confined to the north of the Balkans instead of the arrangement that was made under the treaty of San Stefano; Thrace, Macedonia, and the littoral of the *Ægean* were restored to the Sultan; the Slav principalities of Servia and Montenegro were restricted within reasonable limits; the disturbed districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under the administration of Austria, which was thus offered as a barrier to Slav aggression; and Eastern Roumelia was created with an organic statute which, if wisely accepted by the people of that province, would make them one of the most prosperous communities in the world. The noble duke tells us that the Treaty of Berlin is a political imposture, and that we are found out. Let me place before your lordships very briefly what was the state of affairs effected by the treaty of San Stefano,¹ and what was the state

¹ *Vide* preceding speech on Treaty of Berlin.

of affairs effected by the Treaty of Berlin, remembering that the noble duke dinned into our ears that the Treaty of Berlin was only a copy of the treaty of San Stefano.

At the time the treaty of San Stefano was signed, or immediately before it was signed, the Russian armies were at the gates of Constantinople. They occupied the greater part of the east and north of European Turkey. A vast Slav State was to stretch from the Danube to the Ægean shores, extending inwards from Salonica to the mountains of Albania—a State which when formed would have crushed the Greek population, exterminated the Mussulmans, and exercised over the celebrated straits that have so long been the scene of political interest the baneful and irresistible influence of the Slavs. That was the state of affairs when the treaty of San Stefano was signed, and the British Government, with great difficulty but with equal determination, succeeded in having that treaty submitted to the consideration of the Congress—the Congress of Berlin. And what were the results of that Congress? I have placed before your lordships the main features of the settlement of San Stefano. Let me now place before your lordships what were the results of the Treaty of Berlin. In the first place the Russian armies quitted their menacing positions at the gates of Constantinople. That city, notwithstanding many promises, was not entered. The Russian armies gradually retired, and at last quitted Adrianople and all that district, and they are now evacuating Bulgaria and Roumelia in consequence of the Treaty of Berlin. Bulgaria itself by the Treaty of Berlin becomes a vassal and tributary province of the Porte. Eastern Roumelia becomes a province governed by an organic statute which secures local representation, provincial administration, civil and religious liberty, and many other conditions and arrangements which it would be wearisome now to enter into, but which some day and shortly I am sure your lordships will read with interest.

The condition of Crete was one of the most unsatisfactory, but it was met by an organic statute which has the sympathy of the whole population. Montenegro by the Treaty of Berlin got that accession of territory which really was necessary to its existence, and that access to the sea which was necessary to its pros-

perity. Servia obtained independence by fulfilling the conditions of the Congress of Berlin, that the independence of no new State should be acknowledged which did not secure principles of religious liberty in its constitution; and Roumania also would have been equally acknowledged had not difficulties arisen on that subject, which, however, will be overcome, I have reason to believe, and which certainly England, and no doubt the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin will endeavour to overcome. Well, my lords, I think, after that, it cannot be said that the Treaty of Berlin is a mere copy of the treaty of San Stefano. I think, after that, it cannot be said that it is not one of those great instruments which in all probability will influence the life of Europe, and possibly have an even more extended influence for a considerable time. I look upon it as an instrument which has in it that principle of evolution which we hear of in other matters equally interesting. I believe it will not only effect the reforms which it has immediately in view, but that it will ultimately tend to the general welfare of mankind.

The noble duke laughs at the idea of our effecting any beneficial change in Asia Minor. Well, my lords, there is nothing difficult or great that is not laughed at in the beginning. The noble duke is not the man whom I should have thought would have discredited the attempt that is making. But nothing has been done in this way, says the noble duke. Well, in the first place, if the noble duke supposes that the regeneration of Asia Minor is to be like the occupation of Bulgaria, an affair of nine weeks, he entertains views of Oriental life and character which I venture to deny. But are there no symptoms of change, and change for the better, even in Asia Minor? I think the fact that an eminent statesman like Midhat Pasha has been recalled from exile and appointed governor of Syria—the first governor appointed for a term of years which cannot be capriciously reduced—is one on which we may congratulate ourselves, and I have reason to believe that the influence of that statesman on his government is great. We must also remember that under the Treaty of Berlin there are a variety of commissioners of demarcation

settling the boundaries of different States, and so carrying out a work of inestimable value. The noble duke has made a war-like speech. He has told Turkey that she has in us an ally on whom she cannot depend. He has told Russia that she has only to pursue her policy of aggression, and that it will be accepted by the English Government. And, as far as I can understand him, the noble duke does not treat with any disapprobation the policy of Russia in that respect.

Now, I wish to speak in another tone, but a sincere one, in regard to Russia. I think I can, as an English minister, appeal with pride on behalf of my colleagues and myself to the fact that those great results in regard to the policy which we recommended were, perhaps, not uninfluenced by the presence of a magnificent British fleet, and by the firm tone in which Her Majesty's Government communicated with St. Petersburg. Notwithstanding, I willingly acknowledge there has been on the part of Russia a spirit of wise forbearance, and I believe that she is sincerely anxious to bring about in that part of the world which has been the scene of all these disasters and distressing circumstances a state of affairs which, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of all, we should assist her in bringing about. My lords, I have trespassed on your attention, but the noble duke made so serious and so elaborate a charge upon the Government that it was impossible for me to be silent. I have not said many things I ought to have said, and I may have said some things which I ought not to have said; but this I know. The noble duke says we are a most powerful Government, but, says he, 'If you are a most powerful Government, it is only because you are powerful in Parliament.' Well, that is a state of affairs which it is very easy to parallel in the history of this country. I know that in Opposition men do indulge in dreams. I have had experience of Opposition, and I hope it has left me, it may be a wiser even if a sadder man. I know that there are mirages that rise up before the political eye which are extremely delightful and equally deceptive; and I say, knowing of what materials the Parliament of England is formed, knowing whom I address now,

and knowing who sit in the other House, where I was one of their companions, I cannot but believe that the large majorities which the noble duke has dwelt upon have been accorded to the present Government because it was believed they were a Government resolved to maintain the fame and strength of England.

SPEECH ON ADDRESS. January 7, 1881.

[Lord Beaconsfield here reviews the policy of the new Government in endeavouring to undo whatever their predecessors had accomplished both in Eastern Europe, in India, and in Ireland. The charge was denied by Lord Granville, who declared that at the Foreign Office the policy of the late Government was being steadily carried out.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, who was cheered on rising, said,—My lords, I wish I could feel it my duty to treat the matters before us to-night in as pleasant a manner as the two noble lords who have just addressed us have done. I agree with my noble friend and neighbour who moved the address that the times are critical, and, although I am sure that your lordships are not pessimists, and although, whatever my errors are, pessimism is not generally among the imputations made against me, I confess I have never addressed Parliament with a more deep sense of anxiety and gloom than that which the present state of affairs brings me to feel. There have been occasions in which our foreign affairs have filled us with anxiety, occasions on which our colonial position has been very critical. There have been occasions before this on which our domestic interests, influenced by Ireland, filled the nation with alarm. There have been occasions also in which events have occurred which have demanded the serious attention of Parliament, and which cannot, perhaps, be ranged under the heads I have noticed. But, my lords, I do not recollect a time in which, not only our foreign relations, not only our position in important colonies, not only the almost unparalleled state of our relations with Ireland, but the many other troubles which may require your attention this session, all at the same time have occurred and have demanded the deepest consideration, the deepest sense of responsibility, on the part of your lordships. And, my

lords, I am bound to say that I cannot help feeling that much of the disaster with which we have to grapple at present, is to be attributed in a great degree to the spirit in which Her Majesty's present ministers acceded to office.

My lords, in old days, in times within our experience, when there was a change of administration, it was always considered the duty of both parties to effect no more alteration in the general conduct of our affairs than was absolutely necessary. On former occasions it was generally understood that though there ought to be, and, of course, there was, a due assertion of differences of party principle, still, so far as it was possible, unnecessary changes were to be discouraged in the general conduct of our affairs, so that there should be some continuity of policy, and though there were imputations made, I fear sometimes with justice, but often very unjustly, against our parliamentary government, of the inconsistency in which it involved our affairs, very frequently parliamentary government could not justly be open to that imputation. Well, my lords, it must be admitted that this action to which I have referred introduced some feeling of magnanimity into public life, and its absence is very much to be regretted. No doubt it added greatly to the strength of our functions. But when the new administration was formed nothing of the kind was done. On the contrary, in every manner and on every occasion it was announced that the change of Government meant a change in every part and portion of the Government, that everything which had been concluded was to be repudiated, that everything consummated was to be reversed, and upon the most important questions, either of our foreign relations, our colonial situation, or our domestic policy with regard to Ireland, upon all these questions the utmost change must immediately and rapidly be accomplished. Perpetual and complete reversal of all that had occurred was the order that was given and the profession that was announced.

See, my lords, how this has worked. Take the case which the noble lord who has just addressed you adduced—take the case of our foreign relations. The system of repudiating everything that was approved, promoted, or carried into effect by

their predecessors, this system may be tried very well upon the very subject to which the noble lord has referred. Everything was to be altered. Well, though you might denounce and abuse the Treaty of Berlin, you could not repudiate that treaty, and you could not reverse it. The Treaty of Berlin, being so completely disapproved of by the new Government, it was proposed, most ingeniously, that, as there had been a Congress at Berlin, there should also be a Conference at Berlin; and it was generally understood and felt by everyone that that meant that the regulations of the Congress of Berlin were in fact to be modified, changed, and superseded by the determinations of the Conference. Now, how has that been accomplished? In my observations to-night I will avoid arguing on matters of policy, for which there will be other occasions; but all sensible men will agree that, whatever may have been the defects of the Treaty of Berlin—though I admit none—or the points that may have been neglected or left unsettled, one thing was quite clear and was generally admitted, that at last the peace of Europe was secured. I believe that the Conference of Berlin had the contrary effect, and I think I am not using an unauthorised expression when I say that the result of that Conference was, that the war in the East of Europe and in the West of Asia was on the point of being revived, and England was near being a belligerent, and a belligerent, too, against our old ally. No one can say now that the peace of Europe is certain, or that we are perfectly secure. We have very little information on this subject, though I presume that more will be afforded, but from what we see there is no doubt that even in the space of twenty-four hours events may occur which might shake that peace. What is the cause of all this? It is because Her Majesty's Government, directly they took office, got into this system of superseding and disturbing everything their predecessors had settled.

Now let me advert to another question—that, namely, of Afghanistan. That is a question that must come before the House, and I believe my noble friend the late Governor-General of India will take an opportunity of bringing it before your lordships' notice. Whatever may be our opinion as to the

policy or impolicy of the military occupation of Afghanistan, in this, I think, all will agree—that it was an event of great political moment, and that it was undertaken in consequence of information, part of which only has as yet been revealed to the country, but which is adequate to enable them to learn that it was preceded by startling incidents of conduct on the part of another great Power, which demanded serious consideration. Her Majesty's Government may be perfectly right in the views they take on the subject of Afghanistan. The occupation of that country may have been a most impolitic act, and it may be their duty to counteract its effect, and to terminate the policy that we attempted to establish. All this may be perfectly true, but all impartial persons will feel that such a step should be taken with great prudence, that it should be taken gradually, and that ministers ought not to have gone to the housetops to proclaim their peril to the world—their peril, I may rather say their perplexity. We must remember also that the military feat of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was no mean one. Rarely have the discipline and valour of our troops, both British and native, been more distinguished, and, above all, we have produced a General equal to any conjuncture of the war. These were all circumstances that won respect in Asia and Europe, but the ministers, as I say, go to the housetops to proclaim to every bazaar in the East that they do not know what to do, and that, after all this anxiety, they are going to scuttle out of the country as fast as they can.

What I want your lordships chiefly to observe is the consequence of such conduct, which is of the most destructive and deleterious kind. It may have been our policy to quit Afghanistan, but if we quit it in this spirit and after such declarations every military adventurer feels, 'This is my opportunity the British are going to leave this country, and I will succeed them as far as I can.' Clearly, you have produced a state of anarchy, and at last you say that you will consummate your confession of impotence and blundering by giving up the city of Candahar. But why has all this taken place? Because there have been declarations made on the subject, declarations of the most unmeasured kind, because the country has been agitated to

believe that the change of Government would instantly terminate the dangerous occupation of Afghanistan; and because pledges made in total ignorance of the circumstances of the case have now to be redeemed at the cost of the credit of the country. Both in foreign affairs and in Afghanistan—in the one because the peace of Europe is no longer assured but menaced, and in the other because Central Asia is in a state of anarchy—you have now to pay the cost of declarations made in a polemical and not in a political sense to the people of the country.

I must now touch on that subject which, after all, absorbs all our thoughts at the present moment, and that is the subject of Ireland. When the late Government were responsible for the administration of affairs, the state of Ireland undoubtedly caused much anxiety. In ordinary circumstances I believe the skilful administration of my noble friend near me would in no way have been disturbed; but we had a terrible visitation, and have at the same time to deal with a body of men who will take advantage of distress to render the work of government more difficult. Fortunately the famine was not as fatal as we once feared, and the measures taken by the Government and supported by private charity almost unprecedented, which, under the direction of a noble lady, touched the hearts of the Irish for the time, gave us every hope that we might proceed without further disaster. The Peace Preservation Act certainly had a beneficial effect, and greatly assisted the Government; and our opinion was, although we had before us information which is, no doubt, well known to the present ministers, that it would be possible to carry affairs safely through with the law that then existed, and that, with the mitigation of the calamity that then prevailed, we might grapple with the conspirators, who seek not merely separation from this country, but the establishment of an independent foreign Power.

Just before the general election I felt it my duty, occupying the position I then did, to place before the country issues which I thought were of vast importance, and which demanded at that critical time the consideration of the country. Not sitting in the other House of Parliament, and therefore not having the

privilege of addressing my old constituents, as in old days, I thought it becoming to address to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland a letter, in which I called the attention of the country to the state of Ireland. I placed before the country only two points. I warned it to be most careful not to meddle thoughtlessly with foreign affairs, because I foresaw that if it did, there would be a chance, and more than a chance, of a European war. What has occurred has, I think, quite justified that warning, but we can at least hope that, a war not having occurred, Her Majesty's ministers may have been successful in preventing it. But as regards Ireland, in my letter to the Lord-Lieutenant—on March 8, I think it was—I warned the country that if the Government did not show a becoming vigilance, something would happen which would be almost as bad as famine and pestilence.

Now, what was the consequence of that declaration? The present Government took an early opportunity, soon after I had made that declaration, to express a contrary opinion. They said there was in Ireland an absence of crime and outrage, with a general sense of comfort and satisfaction such as was unknown in the previous history of the country. Now, my lords, that was the issue placed before the country to decide. I warned the constituencies that there was going on in Ireland a conspiracy which aimed at the disunion of the two countries, and probably something more. I said that if they were not careful, something might happen almost as bad as pestilence or famine. The country, on the other hand, was immediately told that there was in Ireland a general sense of comfort and satisfaction unprecedented in the history of that country. Now there was a complete issue to be decided, and the country decided that Ireland was in a state of comfort and satisfaction. My observations, of course, were treated with that ridicule which a successful election always secures. What has occurred in Ireland since then? What is the state of Ireland at this present moment? I do not want to indulge in exaggerated phrases, nor do I wish to use language that would adequately express the horrors which have occurred in that country. I think, however, I am not using exaggerated lan-

guage when I say that in portions of Ireland the sovereignty of our Queen has been absolutely superseded. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say that Her Majesty's Executive in Ireland have absolutely abdicated their functions. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say that there have been months of murder and incendiarism and of every conceivable outrage. I think I am not using exaggerated language when I say that the Judges of the land have been denounced and defied, and that the administration of justice has altogether ceased; and that the law—the Queen's law—is no longer respected by the majority in that country.

What has been the occasion of this? Why have not steps been taken in proper time to prevent what everyone feels might have been nipped in the bud? Why, it was because of these declarations that Ireland was in a state of comfort and content, and because the person who made them, being the most responsible person in the land, or about to become so, felt it necessary to act in his political position in harmony with his polemical one. Now, my lords, what happened when the change of Government took place? The first thing that was done was a very slight thing. We had established a Royal Commission to inquire into the state of agriculture, not only in England, but in Ireland. That Commission had reached Ireland and was very busy in its operations. I believe there never before was a Royal Commission formed with such anxiety on the part of Government that it should be an able, an adequate, and an impartial commission. Every shadow of opinion was represented and the ablest men were invited to sit upon it. I speak with the greatest confidence on this subject, as I myself undertook the task of forming that Commission. No sooner was the Government changed, however, than a new Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the state of agriculture in Ireland. What was the effect of that? Whatever the intention might have been, the effect was to make the country understand that the new Government could place no confidence in the Royal Commission of the late administration.

Well, Her Majesty's Government being in office, the late Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland naturally thought the time had come

when he ought to give them his opinion with regard to that country. There had been very great anxiety to know what would be the course of Her Majesty's Government in regard to the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act. I think there was at that time, if not a formal declaration, at least a general understanding that probably the new Government would not propose to continue that Act. But, however that may be, the Lord-Lieutenant impressed upon Her Majesty's ministers his opinion that the Peace Preservation Act should certainly be continued. Noble lords will perfectly recollect what occurred on that occasion. It has been said very frequently—I do not mean in this House, for that would give it great authority—but it has been said by what are called organs of opinion, which are in communication with political personages of influence, and which, therefore, speak with authority, that it was never the intention of the late Government to continue the Peace Preservation Act. That is not true. It is fortunate that I can prove this in a manner which will be satisfactory to your lordships and to the country, for a noble lord asked me a question on the subject before the dissolution of Parliament. In my reply to him, after deprecating the assumption of the noble lord that, as a matter of course, I should be Prime Minister in the new Parliament, of which I had very great doubt, I used these words.—‘But it is by no means imprudent to assume that the new Parliament will do its duty to the country, and that it will repeat that Act, or, if necessary, support it with stronger measures if they are required in the circumstances of the times.’

My letter to the Lord-Lieutenant involved *the continuance of the Peace Preservation Act*. It remains as a positive fact that the late Government were pledged to it. In regard to what happened out of this House, there can be no question. We had our own Bill drawn, and I am permitted to say that the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, who unfortunately is no longer a member of Parliament, offered that Bill very courteously to his successor. His successor declined *that offer*, but he necessarily had the advantage of the official information upon which the late cabinet had determined to continue the Peace Preservation Act. That information consisted of *confidential*

reports from seventy persons of the highest authority in this matter. All that he had, which alone ought to have convinced him that the time had arrived when that Act ought to be continued. However, Her Majesty's Government took quite a different view. They made up their minds, not only to give a good shake to the Congress of Berlin, and to do everything they could to inform every being in Central Asia, and in every other part of Asia, that they meant to cut and run from the scene of a splendid conquest, but, following the same plan of throwing a stigma on everything which their predecessors had proposed or executed, they determined that Ireland was to be considered as a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction, and they have from that moment been legislating and administering affairs for a country in a state of comfort and satisfaction.

As time has advanced they have changed their course. Now, at the last moment, they are about to do so on a great scale, because, unless they do it on a great scale, it is useless. Why, if they had only deigned to follow in the steps of their predecessors—if they had only partially done so—they would not have found themselves in their present difficulties. Was the country really so devoid of incident that there was nothing to guide them as to the immediate future? Parliament was prorogued on September 7, and the only allusion in the Queen's Speech to the state of Ireland was an expression of satisfaction that the condition of the people had been improved by the harvest. Only a few days afterwards the murder of Lord Mountnorris occurred. Your lordships know the condition of Ireland at the present time. Europe knows it, Asia knows it. It is no longer, unhappily, a merely English question. The honour, perhaps the existence, of England depends upon our rallying our forces, not only with regard to Ireland, but with regard to other scenes of disquietude and danger which have been created by what has occurred in Ireland.

It may be said, If these are your views, why do you not call upon Parliament to express them? Well, I do not know anything which would be more justifiable than an amendment on the Address expressing our deep regret that measures for maintain-

ing peace and order, for guarding life and property, and, let me add, liberty, which I think is equally in danger in Ireland, were not taken in time, and pointing out that if such measures had been taken in time an enormous number of terrible incidents might have been averted; that men would now have been alive who have been murdered; that houses would now have been in existence which have been burned; that cases of torture to man and beast would never have happened—for these things, as your lordships are aware, have mainly occurred within the past two months. But, my lords, there are occasions when even party considerations must be given up. There are occasions when it may not be wise, even for your lordships, to place yourselves, as it were, at the head of public opinion in indignant remonstrance at the action of the ministry. The great dangers and disasters which have been impending or have happened in this country during the past nine months have arisen from the abuse of party feeling; and for that reason alone, if there were no other, I would recommend your lordships to pause before taking any step which would weaken the movements of the administration at this moment. I conclude that the Government have come to their determination in a *bonâ fide* spirit. I expect that their Bills, when introduced, will be found adequate to the occasion, for I am convinced that only ridicule will result if they are not conceived in a comprehensive spirit. I conclude also that it is their intention to proceed with these Bills *de die in diem*, in order that some hope, some courage may be given to our loyal and long-suffering subjects in Ireland. When those Bills have been passed, we shall be ready to consider any other measures which Her Majesty's Government may bring before Parliament. But I think it utter mockery to discuss any questions connected with Ireland now, except the restoration of peace and order, the re-establishment of the sovereignty of the Queen, and a policy that will announce to Europe that the spirit of England has not ceased, and that, great as are the dangers that now environ ministers, the Parliament of England will be equal to the occasion.

PART II.

INDIAN AND COLONIAL SPEECHES.

ROYAL TITLES BILL	MARCH 9, 1876.
AFGHAN WAR	DEC. 10, 1878.
WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA	MARCH 16, 1879.
ANSWER TO DUKE OF ARGYLL	FEB. 20, 1880.
EVACUATION OF CANDAHAR	MARCH 4, 1881.

ROYAL TITLES BILL.¹ March 9, 1876.

[On February 17, 1876, Mr. Disraeli introduced a Bill for enabling Her Majesty to adopt a new title for the sovereignty of India. When it became known that the title selected was that of Empress, a violent ferment was raised by the Opposition, who denounced the attempt to introduce 'a bastard imperialism' into the English monarchy, and under cover of a new form to insinuate the thin end of the wedge of military despotism. At this distance of time one wonders at the violence displayed. It subsequently appeared that the title of Empress was first applied to Her Majesty by the Duke of Argyle when Secretary of State for India.]

IN moving the second reading of this Bill I take the opportunity of noticing a question which was addressed to me a few days ago by the honourable member for Banbury.² I thought at the time that the question was unfair and improper. The question was whether I was then prepared to inform the House of the title which Her Majesty would be advised to adopt with respect to the matter contained in the Bill before us, and my answer was, that I was not then prepared to give the information to the House. It appeared to me that that appeal, as I ventured to remark, was unfair and improper, because, in the first place, on a controversial matter, it required me to make a statement respecting which I could offer no argument, as the wise rules of this House, as regards questions and answers, are established. I should, therefore, have had to place before the House, on a matter respecting which there is controversy, the decision of the Government, at the same time being incapacitated from offering any argument in favour of it.

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

² Mr. B. Samuelson.

I thought the question was improper, also, in the second place, because it was a dealing with the royal prerogative that, to say the least, was wanting, as I thought, in respect. Both sides of the House agree that we are ruled by a strictly constitutional Sovereign. But the constitution has invested Her Majesty with prerogatives of which she is wisely jealous, which she exercises always with firmness, but ever, when the feelings and claims of Parliament are concerned, with the utmost consideration. It is the more requisite, therefore, that we should treat these prerogatives with the greatest respect, not to say reverence. In the present case if Her Majesty had desired to impart to the House of Commons information which the House required, the proper time would certainly be when the Bill in question was under the consideration of the House. It would be more respectful to the House, as well as to the Queen, that such a communication should be made when the House was assembled to discuss the question before them; and such information ought not to be imparted, I think, in answer to the casual inquiry of an individual member.

From the beginning there has been no mystery at any time upon this matter. So far as the Government are concerned they have acted strictly according to precedent, and it has not been in my power until the present evening to impart any information to the House upon the subject on which they intimated a wish to be informed. But, upon the first night, when I introduced this Bill, I did say, alluding to the prerogative of the Queen, and Her Majesty's manner of exercising that prerogative, that I did not anticipate difficulties upon the subject. To this point, in the course of the few observations I have to make, I shall recur; but, before doing so, I shall make some remarks upon the objections which have been made to a title which it has been gratuitously assumed that Her Majesty, with respect to her dominions in India, wishes to adopt. It is a remarkable circumstance that all those who have made objections on this subject, have raised their objections to one particular title alone. One alone has occurred to them—which *primâ facie* is rather an argument in favour of its being an apposite title. No doubt other objections have been urged in the debate, and

I will refer to them before proceeding to the other part of my remarks. It has been objected that the title of Emperor and Empress denotes military dominion; that it has never or rarely been adopted but by those who have obtained dominion by the sword, retained it by the sword, and governed by the sword; and, to use the words of a right honourable gentleman¹ who took part in the recent debate—‘Sentiment clothes the title of Emperor with bad associations.’

Now, the House must at once feel what vague and shadowy arguments—if they can be called arguments—are these: ‘Sentiment clothes the title of Emperor with bad associations.’ I very much doubt whether sentiment does clothe the title of Emperor with bad associations. I can remember, and many gentlemen can remember, the immortal passage of the greatest of modern historians, where he gives his opinion that the happiness of mankind was never so completely assured or so long a time maintained as in the age of the Antonines, and the Antonines were emperors. The honourable gentleman may be of opinion that an imperial title is a modern invention, and its associations to him may be derived from a limited experience, of which he may be proud. But when so large a principle is laid down by one distinguished for his historical knowledge, that ‘Sentiment clothes the title of Emperor with bad associations,’ I may be allowed to vindicate what I believe to be the truth upon this matter. Then a second objection was urged—it was said, ‘This is a clumsy periphrasis in which you are involving the country if you have not only royal but imperial majesties.’ Now, the right honourable gentleman who made the remark, ought to have recollected that there would be no clumsy periphrasis of the kind. The majesty of England requires for its support no epithet. The Queen is not Her Royal Majesty. The Queen is described properly as Her Majesty. Therefore the clumsy periphrasis of ‘Royal and Imperial’ Majesty could never occur.

There is, however, a stronger and more important objection which has been brought to this title of Empress. Put briefly and concisely it is this—that we diminish the supremacy of

¹ Mr. Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrook.

the queenly title by investing Her Majesty, though only locally, with an imperial dignity. I deny that any imperial dignity is superior to the queenly title, and I defy anyone to prove the reverse. (Hear.) I am happy to have that cheer; but I hear and read every day of an intention to invest Her Majesty with a title superior to that which she has inherited from an illustrious line of ancestors. It is necessary, therefore, to notice this statement. In times which will guide us in any way upon such a subject, I doubt whether there is any precedent of an emperor ranking superior to a crowned head, unless that crowned head was his avowed feudatory. I will take the most remarkable instance of imperial sway in modern history. When the Holy Roman Empire existed, and the German Emperor was crowned at Rome and called Cæsar, no doubt the princes of Germany, who were his feudatories, acknowledged his supremacy, whatever might be his title.

But in those days there were great kings—there were kings of France, and kings of Spain, and kings of England—they never acknowledged the supremacy of the Head of the Holy Roman Empire, and the origin, I have no doubt, of the expression of the Act of Henry VIII., where the crown of England is described as an imperial crown, was the determination of that eminent monarch that at least there should be no mistake upon the subject between himself and the Emperor Charles V. These may be considered antiquarian illustrations, and I will not dwell upon them, but will take more recent cases at a time when the intercourse of nations and of Courts was regulated by the same system of diplomacy which now prevails. Upon this question, then, I say there can be no mistake, for it has been settled by the assent, and the solemn assent, of Europe. In the middle of the last century a remarkable instance occurred which brought to a crisis this controversy, if it were a point of controversy. When Peter the Great emerged from his anomalous condition as a powerful sovereign—hardly recognised by his brother sovereigns—he changed the style and title of his office from that of Czar to Emperor. That addition was acknowledged by England and by England alone. The rulers of Russia as Emperors remained

unrecognised by the great comity of nations; and after Peter the Great they still continued to bear the titles of Czar and Czarina; for more than one female sovereign flourished in Russia about the middle of the century. In 1745, Elizabeth, Czarina of Russia, having by her armies and her counsels interfered considerably in the affairs of Europe—probably (though I am not sure of this) influenced by the circumstances that the first Congress of Aix la Chapelle, in the middle of the last century, was about to meet—announced to her allies and to her brother sovereigns that she intended in future to take the title of Empress, instead of Czarina. Considerable excitement and commotion were caused at all the Courts and in all the Governments of Europe in consequence of this announcement; but the new title was recognised on condition that Her Majesty should at the same time write a letter, called, in diplomatic language, a reversal, acknowledging that she thereby made no difference in the etiquette and precedence of the European Courts, and would only rank upon terms of equality with the other crowned heads of Europe. Upon these terms France, Spain, Austria, and Hungary admitted the Empress of Russia into their equal society.

For the next twenty years, under Peter III., there were discussions on the subject; but he also gave a reversal, disclaiming superiority to other crowned heads in taking the title of Emperor. When Catherine II. came to the throne, she objected to write this reversal, as being inconsistent with the dignity of a crowned sovereign; and she herself issued an edict to her own subjects, announcing, on her accession, her rank, style, and title; and distinctly informing her subjects that, though she took that style and title, she only wished to rank with the other sovereigns of Europe. I should say that the whole of the diplomatic proceedings of the world from that time have acknowledged that result, and there can be no question on the subject. There was an attempt at the Congress of Vienna to introduce the subject of the classification of sovereigns; but the difficulties of the subject were acknowledged by Prince Metternich, by Lord Castlereagh, and by all the eminent statesmen of the time; the subject was dropped; the equality of crowned

heads was again acknowledged, and the mode of precedence of their representatives at the different Courts was settled by an alphabetical arrangement, or by the date of their arrival and letters of credit to that Court at once and for ever. The question of equality between those sovereigns who styled themselves Emperors and those who were crowned heads of ancient kingdoms, without reference to population, revenue, or extent of territory, was established and permanently adopted.

Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman the member for Glasgow (Mr. Anderson) said the other day, 'If Empress means nothing more than Queen, why should you have Empress? If it means something else, then I am against adopting it.' Well, I have proved to you that it does not mean anything else. Then, why should you adopt it? Well, that is one of those questions which, if pursued in the same spirit, and applied to all the elements of society, might resolve it into its original elements. The amplification of titles is no new system, no new idea; it has marked all ages, and has been in accordance with the manners and customs of all countries. The amplification of titles is founded upon a great respect for local influences, for the memory of distinguished deeds, and passages of interest in the history of countries. It is only by the amplification of titles that you can often touch and satisfy the imagination of nations, and that is an element which Governments must not despise. Well, then, it is said that if this title of Empress is adopted, it would be un-English. But why un-English? I have sometimes heard the ballot called un-English, and indignant orators on the other side have protested against the use of an epithet of that character which nobody could define, and which nobody ought to employ. I should like to know why the title is un-English. A gentleman the other day, referring to this question now exciting Parliament and the country, recalled to the recollection of the public the dedication of one of the most beautiful productions of the English muse to the Sovereign of this country; and speaking of the age distinguished by an Elizabeth, by a Shakespeare, and by a Bacon, he asked whether the use of the word *Empress*, applied by one who was second in his power of expression and in his poetic resources only to Shake-

spare himself, in the dedication of an immortal work to Queen Elizabeth was not, at least, an act which proved that the word and the feeling were not un-English? Then, of course, it was immediately answered by those who criticised the illustration that this was merely the fancy of a poet. But I do not think it was the fancy of a poet. The fancy of the most fanciful of poets was exhausted in the exuberant imagination which idealised his illustrious Sovereign as the 'Faëry Queen.' He did not call her Empress then—he called her the 'Faëry Queen.' But when his theme excited the admiration of royalty—when he had the privilege of reciting some of his cantos to Queen Elizabeth, and she expressed a wish that the work should be dedicated to her—then Spenser had, no doubt, to consult the friends in whom he could confide as to the style in which he should approach so solemn an occasion, and win to himself still more the interest of his illustrious Sovereign. He was a man who lived among courtiers and statesmen. He had as friends Sidney and Raleigh; and I have little doubt that it was by the advice of Sidney and Raleigh that he addressed his Sovereign as Empress,¹ 'The Queen of England, of Ireland, and of Virginia,' the hand of Sir Walter Raleigh being probably shown in the title of the Queen of Virginia; and it is not at all improbable that Elizabeth herself, who possessed so much literary taste, and who prided herself upon improving the phrases of the greatest poet, revised the dedication. That example clearly shows that the objection of this assumed adoption by Her Majesty of the title of Empress as un-English could hardly exist in an age when the word was used with so much honour—in an age of 'words which wise Bacon and brave Raleigh spake.'

I think it is obvious from these remarks, made upon the assumption that the title which Her Majesty would be pleased to adopt by her Proclamation would be 'Empress,' that the title would be one to which there could be no objection. I am empowered, therefore, to say that the title would be 'Empress,' and that Her Majesty would be 'Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

¹ 'To the most mightie and magnificent Emperesse, Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, &c.'

Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, and Empress of India.' Now, I know it may be said—it was said at a recent debate and urged strongly by the right honourable gentleman the member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster)—that this addition to Her Majesty's style, and in this addition alone, we are treating without consideration the colonies. I cannot in any way concur in that opinion. No one honours more than myself the Colonial Empire of England, no one is more anxious to maintain it. No one regrets more than I do that favourable opportunities have been lost of identifying the colonies with the royal race of England. But we have to deal now with another subject, and one essentially different from the colonial condition. The condition of India and the condition of the colonies have no similarity. In the colonies you have, first of all, a fluctuating population; a man is member of Parliament, it may be, for Melbourne this year, and next year he is member of Parliament for Westminster. A colonist finds a nugget, or he fleeces a thousand flocks. He makes a fortune. He returns to England, he buys an estate, he becomes a magistrate, he represents Majesty, he becomes high sheriff: he has a magnificent house near Hyde Park, he goes to Court, to *levées*, to drawing-rooms; he has an opportunity of plighting his troth personally to his Sovereign: he is in frequent and direct communication with her. But that is not the case with the inhabitant of India.

The condition of colonial society is of a fluctuating character. Its political and social elements change. I remember, twenty years ago, a distinguished statesman (?) who willingly would have seen a Dukedom of Canada. But Canada has now no separate existence. It is called the 'Dominion,' and includes several other provinces. There is no similarity between the circumstances of our colonial fellow-subjects in India. Our colonists are English; they come, they go, they are careful to make fortunes, to invest their money in England, their interests in this country are immense, ramified, complicated, and they have constant opportunities of improving and employing the relations which exist between themselves and their countrymen in the metropolis. Their relations to the Sovereign are ample; they satisfy them. The colonists are proud of those relations;

they are interested in the titles of the Queen ; they look forward to return when they leave England ; they do return ; in short, they are Englishmen.

Now let me say one word before I move the second reading of this Bill, upon the effect it may have upon India. It is not without consideration, it is not without the utmost care, it is not until after the deepest thought, that we have felt it our duty to introduce this Bill into Parliament. It is desired in India ; it is anxiously expected. The princes and nations of India, unless we are deceived—and we have omitted no means by which we could obtain information and form opinions—look to it with the utmost interest. They know exactly what it means, though there may be some honourable members in this House who do not. They know in India what this Bill means, and they know that what it means is what they wish. I do myself most earnestly impress upon the House to remove prejudice from their minds and to pass the second reading of this Bill without a division. Let not our divisions be misconstrued. Let the people of India feel that there is a sympathetic chord between us and them, and do not let Europe suppose for a moment that there are any in this House who are not deeply conscious of the importance of our Indian Empire. Unfortunate words have been heard in the debate upon this subject : but I will not believe that any member of this House seriously contemplates the loss of our Indian Empire. I trust, therefore, that the House will give to this Bill a second reading without a division. By permission of the Queen, I have communicated, on the part of my colleagues, the intention of Her Majesty, which she will express in her Proclamation. If you sanction the passing of this Bill, it will be an act, to my mind, that will add splendour even to her throne, and security even to her empire.

THE AFGHAN WAR December 10, 1878

[On December 5, 1878, Parliament was called together to receive a message from the Queen requesting that provision might be made for an expeditionary force despatched against the Ameer of Afghanistan. He had received a Russian envoy, and had declined to admit an English one. Explanations were demanded and refused, and war was the result. Lord Grey moved an Amendment to the Address, which was negatived without a division. But on the following Monday, the 9th, on Lord Cranbrook moving that Parliament do consent to the application of the Indian Revenue to this purpose, an Amendment embodying a vote of censure was moved by Lord Halifax and produced a debate of two nights. The Amendment was defeated by 201 votes to 65, and on the second night Lord Beaconsfield wound up the debate with a speech which extorted the admiration of some of his most hostile critics.]

MY LORDS,—I hope you will think me justified if I ask to detain you for a few moments. My noble and learned friend on the woolsack sketched to us, as it were in allegory, a picture that may give to your lordships an idea of this north-western boundary that has been the subject of discussion these two nights. My lords, I think it is advisable that at this moment some general conception of this scheme should be in your possession. I would picture it, not in allegory, but such as it really exists. That boundary, that north-western boundary of our Indian Empire, is a chain of mountains of the highest branch, a branch, indeed, of mountains the highest in the world, and higher even than the Andes. Yet no portion of this country is in possession of the inhabitants of the Indian Empire or Government, and through its passes invading armies may make their raids, or wild and turbulent tribes ravage the fertile plains which are entrusted to your Government in that part of the world. Well, then, my lords, I ventured to say

that the inconvenience and the injury of such a boundary were felt by the Government of India, and had been more than once the subject of their consideration, and the noble viscount who moves this amendment expressed upon that subject his incredulity with respect to my observations. He told us that he had much acquaintance with the Governors of India, and that he could not recall any Viceroy who had experienced a feeling or conviction of that kind.

Well, now, my lords, let us look for a moment to the facts of the case. We have been in possession of this boundary for, I believe, twenty-eight years. During that period we have been obliged to fit out nineteen considerable expeditions to control its inhabitants, between fifty and sixty guerilla enterprises, and have employed upon these expeditions between 50,000 and 60,000 of Her Majesty's troops. All I can say is that if none of the Viceroys of India who are the acquaintances of the noble lord have felt the inconvenience, or if they have been insensible to the injury, of such a boundary, they were not fit to be Viceroys. But I cannot believe that that is the case. My information would lead me to a very different result. The government of India is not merely a concern of Viceroys, but it is a concern of statesmen, both eminent civilians and military leaders of world-wide renown. And it was the information which I derived from one of the most eminent individuals of that character and class that influenced me to make that observation which I made. That eminent personage was for a considerable time a member of the Indian administration. He was not prejudiced in favour of the views adopted by Her Majesty's Government. For a considerable period, notwithstanding his sense of the inconvenience and the injury of this boundary, he was one of those who opposed any change, because he believed it was better to incur that inconvenience and injury than to embark on the difficult office of making a fresh boundary and disturbing arrangements which were necessarily of a political character. Remembering the possibility of some Power equal to our own attacking us in that part of the world, and remembering also that some ten years ago that Power was 2,000 miles distant from our boundaries, a man might con-

sistently have upheld the arrangement that then existed, and yet might by the force of circumstances and the lapse of time be now a sincere supporter of the policy which Her Majesty's Government now recommends.

That, for instance, is the case of Lord Napier of Magdala. It was only recently that I received a telegram from him in which he says, 'A careful study of our frontier convinces me that a rectification of our frontier is necessary.' Those are the words of one of great experience and of consummate ability and judgment, who for a long time was opposed to that which he now finds is absolutely necessary. He does not shrink from the use of the word 'rectification,' although definitions of that word have been given by many noble lords opposite which are not to be found in any dictionary. The noble earl who resumed the debate to-night spoke of rectification as though it were another phrase for spoliation and annexation. I expected those cheers and wished to receive them. Another noble earl who spoke in the debate yesterday—I wrote down his words, because, unfortunately, on a previous occasion he seemed to accuse me of misquoting him—said, 'I hate the word "rectification." It seems to me to savour of the worst traditions of the French Empire—a word to conceal wrong and robbery.' A noble earl¹ described it as a dark word, and he seemed to tremble as he uttered it. For my own part I cannot agree in any of these definitions. The rectification of our frontier is a correct diplomatic term which is accepted by the highest authorities and which has a precise and a definite meaning. The rectification of frontiers, instead of being a word of the French Empire, had been long adopted, and your lordships will be surprised to find that the peace of the world very much depends upon those treaties. If all the treaties for the rectification of frontiers were destroyed as instruments of the terrible kind described by noble lords opposite and by the noble earl on the cross benches, the peace of the world would be endangered, and might be destroyed.

Well, my lords, after that observation the other night, I took a note of some treaties for the rectification of frontiers,

¹ Earl of Carnarvon

and I took them on conditions which I am sure your lordships will agree are fair. First of all they are all modern—I would not produce old specimens. Secondly, they are not only modern treaties, but treaties none of which were entered into or negotiated after a war. Therefore they are not the consequences of force or fraud. Now, I find that from 1856 to 1868—quite in our own time—there were five treaties between France and Spain for the rectification of frontiers, and I have no hesitation myself in saying that if any of those treaties had not taken place, there would have been war between France and Spain, and that the existence of those treaties prevented war. Between France and Switzerland there was a treaty for the rectification of frontiers in December 1862—a treaty of some celebrity—one which was certainly not a dark instrument. It was a treaty which certainly has contributed to the maintenance of peace. There is a treaty between Great Britain and France for the rectification of frontiers, and it might surprise one to find a treaty of that kind between an island and a continent; but it had reference to their possessions in the East Indies. That is a modern treaty. There is a treaty for the rectification of frontiers between Italy and Switzerland, and one between Portugal and the Transvaal, of which I believe the noble earl on the cross benches has some knowledge. To make it complete, there is a treaty for the rectification of frontiers between Great Britain and an Oriental kingdom like Afghanistan—the kingdom of Siam.

Now, I believe the number of those treaties I have mentioned—some dozen—might be doubled or even trebled if it were necessary. The observation of the noble earl¹ deserves remark. A rectification of frontiers does not necessarily involve a diminution of territory. Many such treaties are carried on by an equivalent. I made no application of those treaties to any case like Afghanistan. I have not touched upon that point yet. The noble earl is impetuous. It has been said that I stated the object of the war to be a rectification of frontier—the substitution of a scientific for a haphazard frontier. But in the first place I never said that was the object of the war. I

¹ Earl Grey.

treated it as a possible consequence of the war, which is a very different thing. Our application to the Ameer was, in fact, founded upon the principle of rectifying our frontier without any disturbance of territory whatever.

What was our difficulty with regard to Afghanistan? We could gain no information as to what was going on beyond the mountain range or what was preparing in the numerous valleys of Afghanistan. What we wanted, therefore, was eyes to see and ears to hear, and we should have attained our object had the Ameer made to us those concessions which are commonly granted by all civilised States, and which even some Oriental States do not deny us—namely, to have a minister at his capital—a demand which we did not press—and men like our consuls-general at some of his chief towns. That virtually would have been a rectification of our frontier, because we should have got rid of those obstacles that rendered it utterly impossible for us to conduct public affairs with any knowledge of the circumstances with which we had to deal as regarded Afghanistan. Therefore, the noble earl is precipitate in concluding, because I am in favour of a rectification of frontier, that necessarily any change would occur. I only say that abstractedly there is no absolute necessity for any change, because you may rectify a frontier in different ways—by equivalents and so forth.

But, my lords, my observations on that subject in another place¹ were made rather with reference in my mind to certain wild ideas that were prevalent, to the effect that it was the intention of the Government to conquer Afghanistan and annex it to our Empire. I explained that that was not our object, and that a scientific rectification of our frontier would effect for us all the results we desired. And, my lords, what is a scientific frontier compared with a haphazard one? Why, it is, as a great military authority has said, this—a scientific frontier can be defended with a garrison of 5,000 men, while with a haphazard one you may require an army of 100,000 men, and even then not be safe from sudden attack. It is not for us now to consider what arrangements may be made with this

¹ Speech at Guildhall Nov 9 1858

object further than to say that Her Majesty's ministers, after all that has occurred, will feel it their duty to take care of the security of the Indian Empire. Whatever may be the objections to the present north-western frontier of our Indian Empire, I have no doubt things would have gone on in the same way, members of the Indian administration would have been equally conscious of the deficiencies of that frontier, and yet so difficult is the task of amending the frontier, and so great are the obstacles which certainly present themselves, things would have gone on, I dare say, as they had gone on for twenty-eight years, had it not been for the sudden appearance of Russia in the immediate vicinity of Afghanistan.

I speak on that subject with frankness. It is, no doubt, much easier to speak of it now than it would have been a year ago, or eight months ago. Eight months ago war was more than probable between this country and Russia, and a word might have precipitated that war. At present we know from the language of the gracious Speech from the Throne that Her Majesty's relations with all Powers are friendly, and they are not less friendly with Russia than with any other Power. I will say of the expedition which Russia was preparing in Central Asia at the time when she believed that war was inevitable between our country and herself—I will say at once that I hold that all those preparations on the part of Russia were perfectly allowable; and if war had occurred of course they would have contributed to bring about the ultimate result whatever it might have been. Had we been in the position of Russia, I doubt not we might have undertaken some enterprise of a similar kind. No doubt there were a great many wild expressions uttered by persons of some authority. No doubt there have been dreams indulged in by individuals which were never realised. I dare say there are Russian officers who would not have disliked to cool the hoofs of their horses in the waters of the Indus; on the other hand, I dare say, there were some English soldiers who would have liked to catch a glance of the Caspian, and to have exclaimed *θάλαττα*, like the soldiers of Xenophon. We may now dismiss from our considerations all these dreams and wild expressions, and admit that if war had occurred between the

two countries, all the preparations in Central Asia against Great Britain in India were perfectly justifiable, but, when it was found out that war was not to be made, Her Majesty's Government made *courteous* representations to St. Petersburg, and it was impossible that anything could be more frank and satisfactory than the manner in which they were met. The Emperor of Russia said, 'It is very true we did intend to injure you as much as we could on your Indian border, but war has not occurred. War, I trust, will not occur between Russia and England. We have already given orders for the troops to retire to their old stations beyond the Oxus; our ambassador shall be merely considered as a provisional ambassador on a mission of courtesy, and as soon as possible he shall return.' I think that was sufficient and satisfactory conduct on the part of Russia in regard to this matter.

But it is totally impossible for us, after all that has occurred, to leave things as they were. After you had found the Russian armies almost in sight of Afghanistan, and their embassy within the walls of Cahul, you could not go on with the old system and indulge in the fancy that your frontier was a becoming and secure frontier in the circumstances. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to consider what course we should take. The noble earl who spoke last night from the cross bench made a most ingenious speech, marked by all his characteristics. I never was more pleased. I listened for a long time to what seemed a complete vindication of the Government; and remembering it came from an old comrade in arms with whom I had worked for a quarter of a century with entire concert, who had left me unfortunately from circumstances over which he had no control, I thought he was making the *amende* by taking an early opportunity of vindicating the policy of the Government. But, before sitting down, all that romantic flutter of the heart which I had experienced entirely ceased when I found that, notwithstanding his approbation of the Government policy, he was going to vote for the amendment. What surprised me more than anything was the reason he gave for it, and that was because we did not go to war with Russia. The noble lord said, 'If you acted logically and properly you ought

to have gone to war with Russia, and therefore I must vote for the amendment.' 'You ought not only to have gone to war with Russia, but in regard to Afghanistan you ought to have treated the Ameer with more courtesy and kindness. You ought to have made appeals to him and taken every step which might gain his consideration and influence his policy.' My lords, that is the course which we have pursued. Really, the Ameer of Afghanistan has been treated like a spoiled child. He has had messages sent to him, he has had messengers offered to him. He has sent messengers to us who have been courteously received. We have written him letters, some of which he has not answered, and others he has answered with unkindness. What more could we do? Yet the noble earl is going to vote against the Government, because with, we think, an imperfect conception of our conduct, he says we have behaved harshly to the Ameer, and not taken the proper course of behaving hostilely to Russia. But, then, remember Russia has taken every step in this business so as to make honourable amends to England, and her conduct presents the most striking contrast to that furnished by the Ameer.

Then there was another point which at this late hour of the night I cannot dwell upon, but which I will notice, because it has been treated with great misconception. It refers to the financial part of the question—to the expenses. My noble friend on the cross benches has no confidence in our finance. He recalls the instance of the Abyssinian invasion, and he says that there was an estimate of 3,000,000*l.*, and it turned out to be 9,000,000*l.* My noble friend ought to be well informed on that subject, because it was at his instance and by his advice that we made war upon Abyssinia. I believe better advice was never given; a more necessary war was never made; but when that war took place it unfortunately occurred very late in the season, and the cabinet were of opinion and were informed by those who were competent to advise them in such matters that the affair could not be finished in one campaign. But information reached the Government which convinced them that by great exertions and expense it might be concluded in one campaign, and we did not hesitate to incur

that expense, which amounted to a very large sum, and which was chiefly spent in obtaining means of transport. But it was through that expenditure that Lord Napier, in addition to his great qualities and skill, was enabled to conclude the Abyssinian War in one campaign. If you had had two campaigns, you would have spent not 9,000,000*l.*, but more. In the second campaign you might have had a very bad season, instead of the very fine season that we had, and you might, instead of savages, have found European officers who would have assisted them in resisting their enemy. But, instead of that, Lord Napier conducted the one campaign to a successful issue without, I believe, the loss of a single life.

Well, my lords, the question is, What is the course we ought to take at the present moment? I was in hopes, after the debate the other night, in which no one interfered with those members of your lordships' House whose conduct was implicated in the various Blue-books on the table, that we might have discussed the political character of the question much more fully than we have done, and that we should not be again lost in a series of what I must call wrangles about the conduct of ministers who are in office and who are out. If the noble viscount who has just sat down is satisfied with the triumphant speech of the late Viceroy of India, as he describes it, I can only say that it is not a speech which will give to the people of England that knowledge which is desirable, and which they wish to have, of the great question at issue. If I am to sum up the three nights' debate which we virtually have had upon this matter, I should say it must be summed up in a sentence, so far as the discussions have gone. We have done something which in theory you approve, and which, if England had acted in time, you would have done yourselves. In a despatch of the noble Viceroy who addressed us at such length this evening your lordships will find this statement. His Government is alarmed by an account that the Russians are going to occupy Merv, and what is proposed is this. He proposes that we should make—I do not know that it was not to be an offensive and defensive alliance, but certainly a defensive alliance with Afghanistan, and that English officers

should be immediately admitted to Herat. What is the difference——

Lord Northbrook: I never made any such proposal.

The Earl of Beaconsfield: I am sorry that the noble lord is in the habit of contradicting without appealing to documents. I can give the date to the noble lord. He will find it in June, 1875. The despatch says, 'Much discussion has recently taken place as to the effect that would be produced by a Russian advance to Merv. We have before stated to Her Majesty's Government our apprehension that the assumption by Russia of authority over the whole Turcoman country would create alarm in Afghanistan, and we think it desirable to express our opinion of the course which should be adopted if it should take place.' Here it is: 'It would then become necessary to give additional and more specific assurances to the ruler of Afghanistan that we are prepared to assist him to defend Afghanistan against attack from without.' 'It would probably be desirable to enter into a treaty engagement with him,'—not merely an assurance, but 'a treaty engagement with him; and the establishment of a British resident in Herat would be the natural consequence of such an engagement and of the nearer approach of the Russian frontier.' I appeal to your lordships whether this quotation does not entirely substantiate my statement as to the policy of the noble earl, and whether my summary comparison between the policy of the late Viceroy and our own is not correct. I have no objection at any time to be interrupted, and the only reason why I regret it now is that it will add to the few moments during which I shall have to trouble you.

I received yesterday a communication from Lord Napier of Magdala, who could not arrive in time to take part in this debate. He says, 'Afghanistan, if in the hands of a hostile Power, may at any time deal a fatal blow to our Empire. We cannot remain on the defensive without a ruinous drain on our resources. Our frontier is weak; an advanced position is necessary for our safety.' When I am told that no military authority justifies Her Majesty's Government, I can appeal with confidence to one who, I believe, must rank among the very highest

military authorities. I will not detain your lordships, because it is impossible, in your exhausted state, having met at an extraordinarily early hour to-day, to enter into any great discussion. What I want to impress on your lordships before you divide—which you will do in a very few minutes—is that you should not misapprehend the issue on which you have to decide. It is a very grave one. It is not a question of the Khyber Pass merely and of some small cantonments at Dakka or at Jellalabad. It is a question which concerns the character and the influence of England in Europe. And your conduct to-day will animate this country and encourage Europe, if it be such as I would fain believe you are determined to accomplish.

My lords, I object entirely to this amendment of the noble lord. It is an absurd position almost in which to put the House of Lords to come down and appeal to them to stop the supplies to Her Majesty. If the amendment is substituted for our original motion, that would be the inevitable result. I cannot believe that many noble lords opposite, when they accurately understand the issue which is before them, can sanction such a course. They can scarcely have been conscious of the dangerous precipice to which the noble viscount, the mover of the amendment, was leading them. We have seen in this debate an indignant spirit hostile to these tactics evinced by some of the most eminent members of the party. The speech of the noble duke,¹ which was hailed from both sides of the House, was one which expressed the sentiments which I am sure the great majority must feel. What I see in the amendment is not an assertion of great principles, which no man honours more than myself. What is at the bottom of it is rather that principle of peace at any price which a certain party in this country upholds. It is that dangerous dogma which I believe animates the ranks before me at this moment, although many of them may be unconscious of it. That deleterious doctrine haunts the people of this country in every form. Sometimes it is a committee; sometimes it is a letter; sometimes it is an amendment to the Address; sometimes it is a proposition to stop the supplies. That doctrine has done more mischief than any I can well recall that have

¹ The Duke of Somerset

been afloat in this century. It has occasioned more wars than the most ruthless conquerors. It has disturbed and nearly destroyed that political equilibrium so necessary to the liberties of nations and the welfare of the world. It has dimmed occasionally for a moment even the majesty of England. And, my lords, to-night you have an opportunity, which I trust you will not lose, of branding these opinions, these deleterious dogmas, with the reprobation of the Peers of England.

WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. March 26, 1879

[The following speech was delivered on the occasion of a Resolution proposed by the Marquis of Lansdown to the effect 'That this House, while willing to support Her Majesty's Government in all necessary measures for defending the possessions of Her Majesty in South Africa, regrets that the *ultimatum*, which was calculated to produce immediate war, should have been presented to the Zulu King without authority from the responsible advisers of the Crown, and that an offensive war should have been commenced without imperative and pressing necessity or adequate preparation, and the House regrets that, after the censure passed upon the High Commissioner by Her Majesty's Government in the despatch of March 19, 1879, the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be returned in his hands' The motion was negatived by a majority of 95—the 'contents' being 61, tho 'non contents' 156]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,—I generally find there is one advantage at the end of a debate besides the relief which is afforded by its termination, and that is that both sides of the House seem pretty well agreed as to the particular point that really is at issue ; but the rich humour of the noble duke¹ has again diverted us from the consideration of the motion really before the House. If the noble duke and his friends were desirous of knowing what was the policy which Her Majesty's Government were prepared generally to pursue in South Africa, if they were prepared to challenge the policy of Sir Bartle Frere in all its details, I should have thought they would have produced a very different motion from that which is now lying on your lordships' table ; for that is a motion of a most limited character, and, according to the strict rules of parliamentary discussion, precludes you from most of the subjects which have lately been introduced to our consideration, and which principally have emanated from noble lords oppo-

¹ The Duke of Somerset

site. We have not been summoned here to-day to consider the policy of the acquisition of the Transvaal. These are subjects on which I am sure the Government would be prepared to address your lordships if their conduct were clearly and fairly impugned. And with regard to the annexation of the province, which has certainly very much filled the mouths of men of late, I can easily conceive that that would have been a subject for fair discussion in this House, and we should have heard, as we have heard to-night, though in a manner somewhat unexpected, from the nature of the resolution before us, from the noble lord who was recently the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the principal reasons which induced the Government to sanction that policy—a policy which I believe can be defended, but which has not been impugned to-night in any formal manner.

What has been impugned to-night is the conduct of the Government in sanctioning, not the policy of Sir Bartle Frere, but his taking a most important step without consulting them, which on such a subject is the usual practice with all Governments. But the noble lord opposite who introduced the subject does not even impugn the policy of the Lord High Commissioner, and it was left for the noble duke who has just addressed us, and who ought to have brought forward this question if his views are so strongly entertained by him on the matter, not in supporting a resolution such as now lies on your lordships' table, but one which would have involved a discussion of the policy of the Government and that of the high officer who is particularly interested in it.

My noble friend the noble marquis¹ who very recently addressed the House touched the real question which is before us, and it is a very important question, although it is not of the expansive character of the one which would have been justified by the comments of noble lords opposite. What we have to decide to-night is this—whether Her Majesty's Government shall have the power of recommending to the Sovereign the employment of a high officer to fulfil duties of the utmost importance, or whether that exercise of the prerogative on their advice shall be successfully impugned and that appoint-

¹ Lord Salisbury.

ment superseded by noble lords opposite. That course is perfectly constitutional if they are prepared to take the consequences. But let it be understood what the issue is. It is this,—that a censure upon the Government is called for because they have selected the individual who on the whole they think is the best qualified successfully to fulfil the duties of High Commissioner. The noble lords opposite make that proposition; and if they succeed they will succeed in that which has hitherto been considered one of the most difficult tasks of the Executive Government—that is to say, they will supersede the individual whom the Sovereign, in the exercise of her prerogative, under the advice of her ministers, has selected for an important post. I cannot agree in the general remark made by the noble duke that because an individual has committed an error, and even a considerable error, for that reason, without any reference either to his past services or his present qualifications, immediately a change should be recommended and he should be recalled from the scene of his duties.

I remember myself a case not altogether different from the present one. It happened some years ago when I sat in the other House. Then a very high official—a diplomatist of great eminence—a member of the Liberal party—had committed what was deemed a great indiscretion, and was deemed a great indiscretion by several members of his own party; and the Government were asked in a formal manner by a Liberal member whether that distinguished diplomatist had been in consequence recalled. But the person who was then responsible for the conduct of public affairs in that House—the humble individual who is now addressing your lordships—made this answer with the full concurrence of his colleagues—denied that that distinguished diplomatist was recalled, and said that great services are not cancelled by one act or one single error, however it may be regretted, at the moment. That is what I said then with regard to Sir James Hudson,¹ and what I say now with regard to Sir Bartle Frere. But I do not wish to rest on that. I confess that, so keen is my sense of responsibility and

¹ Sir James Hudson was minister at Turin from 1852 to 1863, and was thought to have expressed himself indiscreetly on the question of Italian nationality.

that of my colleagues, and I am sure also that of noble lords opposite, that we would not allow our decisions in such matters to be unduly influenced by personal considerations of any kind. What we had to determine is this, Was it wise that such an act on the part of Sir Bartle Frere as, in fact, commencing war without consulting the Government at home, and without their sanction, should be passed unnoticed? Ought it not to be noticed in a manner which should convey to that eminent person a clear conviction of the feelings of Her Majesty's Government; and at the same time was it not their duty to consider, were he superseded, whether they could place in his position an individual equally qualified to fulfil the great duties and responsibility resting on him? That is what we had to consider. We considered it entirely with reference to the public interest, and the public interest alone, and we arrived at a conviction that on the whole the retention of Sir Bartle Frere in that position was our duty, notwithstanding the inconvenient observations and criticisms to which we were, of course, conscious it might subject us; and, that being our conviction, we have acted upon it.

It is a very easy thing for a Government to make a scape-goat; but that is conduct which I hope no gentleman on this side, and I believe no gentleman sitting opposite, would easily adopt. If Sir Bartle Frere had been recalled—if he had been recalled in deference to the panic, the thoughtless panic, of the hour, in deference to those who have no responsibility in the matter, and who have not weighed well and deeply investigated all the circumstances and all the arguments which can be brought forward, and which must be appealed to to influence our opinions on such questions—no doubt a certain degree of odium might have been diverted from the heads of Her Majesty's ministers, and the world would have been delighted, as it always is, to find a victim. That was not the course which we pursued, and it is one which I trust no British Government ever will pursue. We had but one object in view, and that was to take care that at this most critical period the affairs of Her Majesty in South Africa should be directed by one not only qualified to direct them, but who was superior to any other

individual whom we could have selected for that purpose. The sole question that we really have to decide to night is—Was it the duty of Her Majesty's Government to recall Sir Bartle Frere in consequence of his having declared war without our consent? We did not think it our duty to take that course, and we do not think it our duty to take that course now. Whether we are right in the determination at which we have arrived is the sole question which the House has to determine upon the motion before it.

The noble duke opposite¹ has told us that he should not be contented without being made acquainted with the whole policy which Her Majesty's Government are prepared to pursue in South Africa. If the noble duke will introduce that subject we shall be happy to discuss it with him. No one could introduce it in a more interesting, and, indeed, in a more entertaining manner than the noble duke, who possesses that sarcastic facility that so well qualifies him to express his opinion on such a matter. I think, however, that we ought to have had rather longer notice before we were called upon to discuss so large a theme which has now been brought suddenly before us. If the noble marquis who introduced this subject had given us notice of a motion of this character we should not have hesitated for a moment to meet it. I have, however, no desire to avoid discussing the subject of our future policy in South Africa, even on so general a notice as we have received in reference to it from the noble duke. Sir Bartle Frere was selected by the noble lord² who formerly occupied the position of Secretary for the Colonies chiefly to secure one great end—namely, to carry out that policy of confederation in South Africa which the noble lord had successfully carried out on a previous occasion with regard to the North American Colonies.

If there is any policy which in my mind is opposed to the policy of annexation it is that of confederation. By pursuing the policy of confederation we bind States together, we consolidate their resources, and we enable them to establish a strong frontier, and where we have a strong frontier that is the best security against annexation. I myself regard a policy of annex-

¹ The Duke of Somerset

² Lord Carnarvon

ation with great distrust. I believe that the reasons of State which induced us to annex the Transvaal were not, on the whole, perfectly sound. But what were the circumstances under which that annexation was effected. The Transvaal was a territory which was no longer defended by its occupiers. The noble lord opposite,¹ who formerly had the colonies under his management, spoke of the conduct of Sir Theophilus Shepstone as though he had not taken due precautions to effect the annexation of that province, and said that he was not justified in concealing that he had not successfully consummated his object. The noble lord said that he had not assembled troops enough in the province to carry out properly the policy of annexation. But Sir Theophilus Shepstone particularly refers to the very fact to show that so unanimous and so united was the sentiment in the province in favour of annexation that it was unnecessary to send any large force there to bring it about. The annexation of that province was a necessity—a geographical necessity.

But the annexation of the Transvaal was one of the reasons why those who were connected with that province might have calculated upon the permanent existence of Zululand as an independent State. I know it is said that when we are at war, as we unfortunately now are, with the Zulus or any other savage nation, even though we inflicted upon them some great disaster and might effect an arrangement with them of a peaceable character, before long the same Power would again attack us unless we annexed the territory. I have never considered that a legitimate argument in favour of annexation of a barbarous country. It is very true that if we defeated the Zulus to-morrow, as I trust that we shall shortly in a very significant manner, in a few years another war may break out between ourselves and them. But similar results might occur in Europe if we went to war with one of our neighbours, as we unfortunately have done on previous occasions; and even if we defeated our neighbours, when their resources revived, when their population increased, and when they had improved their arms of precision, it would be very likely that they might

¹ Lord Kimberley.

seize a favourable opportunity to go to war with us again. But is that an argument why we should not hold our hand until we have *completely crushed our adversary*, and is that any reason why we should pursue a policy of extermination with regard to a barbarous nation with whom we happen to be at war? That is a policy which I hope will never be sanctioned by this House.

It is, of course, possible that we may again be involved in war with the Zulus, but it is an equal chance that in the development of circumstances in that part of the world the Zulu people may have to invoke the aid and the alliance of England against some other people, and that the policy dictated by feelings and influences which have regulated our conduct with regard to European States may be successfully pursued with regard to less civilised nations in a different part of the world. This is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and therefore they cannot be in favour of a policy of annexation, because it is directly opposed to it. I will not enter into any minute discussion of the various questions which by means of their association with the main question have been imported into the debate. They have really nothing to do with the single issue that is now before your lordships, and upon which in a very short time you will record your opinion. It is not the policy of England with regard to South Africa now for some years past that is called in question. Different cabinets and different schools of political opinion are equally interested in maintaining that policy. It is not, in fact, the annexation of the Transvaal province upon which you are now called to decide. It is not, in fact, any of the matters that have been treated in detail to-night, but which really do not branch out of the resolution which is on the table, and to which if their correctness is questioned the noble lord will have a legitimate opportunity of calling your lordships' attention.

The question we have before us now is whether Her Majesty's ministers have acted with policy in retaining the services of Sir Bartle Frere in the circumstances in which they have been retained. On the part of the Government, I give my opinion here publicly that in taking that course we took one for the

public welfare; that we were influenced by no personal considerations; that we were influenced by none of those feelings which it is difficult for even honourable men when they find a distinguished public officer in difficulty or disgrace to be free from; that we divested ourselves from any other sentiment but doing that which in a most difficult state of affairs was for the public advantage. And if you wish the public advantage to be first considered, and not the triumph of a party, you will to-night give your decided negative to the motion of the noble marquis.

EVACUATION OF CANDAHAR. March 4, 1881.

[One of the first acts of the new Government which acceded to power in April 1880 was to make preparations for relinquishing the positions in Afghanistan which we had acquired by the war of 1879. It was still hoped, however, that they meant to retain Candahar, a fortress commanding the only route by which an invading army could approach India. When it was found that this was not the case, and that Candahar, too, was to be abandoned, Lord Lytton, on March 3, brought forward a motion in the House of Lords to the effect that there was nothing in the information laid before their lordships to justify the abandonment of Candahar. After two nights' debate the Resolution was carried by a majority of 89, the 'contents' being 165, the 'non-contents' 76. The speeches of Lord Lytton and the Marquis of Salisbury, taken together with Lord Beaconsfield's, complete the case of the Opposition. It was to this speech that Lord Granville referred in his graceful tribute to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield when he said he had seen him swallow drugs to allay the pain from which he suffered in order that he might be able to place his views before their lordships' House.]

THE question really before your lordships is whether it is or is not wise to evacuate Candahar, and I shall endeavour to confine my observations strictly to that subject, or at least with one exception of a very slight character. I see no use in reviewing again the history of the Afghan war or of the proceedings which preceded it. Your lordships, having been appealed to on that subject, have given your opinion in great numbers and after long and deep discussion. It would, therefore, in my opinion be unnecessary for me now to enter upon a consideration of that matter in detail. There are one or two salient facts to guide us in coming to a conclusion on this matter, and which it occurs to me to allude to at this moment, owing to the tone which the debate has taken. It is on record that the Ameer of Afghanistan appealed for succour some years ago to

the Viceroy of the Queen in India, who is now First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Viceroy thought it his duty to reject the overtures made to him. It also stands upon record that this rejection was the origin of all the misunderstandings and misfortunes which have since occurred. It also stands upon record that about three years afterwards, panic-stricken, I suppose, by the rumour that the Russians were approaching Merv, the then Viceroy decided on the plan which, in his opinion, should be then adopted to meet the difficulties and dangers of such a proceeding, and he proposed an offensive and defensive treaty in Afghanistan, and the establishment of a resident minister on the British side of Herat. These are great salient truths, and I must say that I am quite surprised, remembering these historical facts, at the tone which the noble lord the First Lord of the Admiralty took with reference to my noble friend the late Viceroy of India. One would suppose that the noble earl was not only a pupil of the peace at any price school, but that he was also graduating for higher honours in the more refined school which would wage war and at the same time negotiate, more especially if our arms had been defeated. I was very much disappointed, my lords, at the reply the noble duke the Lord Privy Seal made to my noble friend near me. I had listened, as a very full House had listened, with pleasure to that speech, and a speech more exhaustive, more animated, more completely touching every point of the subject I have rarely heard. Well, I knew that my noble friend was to be followed by one whose ability was equal to any emergency—one who is an ornament of this House, and invariably delights the audience which he addresses. Well, my lords, what did we hear? Was there any answer to the speech of my noble friend? On the contrary, we had a series of biographies of Indian worthies, and when the list closed it was, as usual, flung at the head of my noble friend the late Viceroy. Under these circumstances I think we have had enough of recurrence to the past, and that we may confine our consideration to the point before us.

My lords, there is one point only, before I touch upon the question of Candahar, on which I would like to make one or

two remarks, and that is about our relations with Russia, which have formed so important a portion of our discussion to-night as on previous occasions. Now, my lords, when my noble friend and myself were commissioned to proceed as plenipotentiaries to Berlin nearly three years ago, our instructions were to achieve, if possible, two great objects. One, of course, to secure and guard the interests of our own country, and the other to combine with the other Powers if possible for some general arrangement or some unity of feeling which might secure, if not the perpetual, at least the lasting, peace of Europe. Well, my lords, when we came to consider our interests in this subject it was quite obvious that it was quite impossible to arrive at any arrangement which would give a fair probability of a lasting European peace if there was not sympathy on the part of Russia, and the time seemed to have arrived, when a Congress was called upon to settle the affairs of Europe, to make some efforts to come, if possible, to some direct understanding with Russia which might tend to the beneficial results we had in view.

I must say that before we could take any steps we were anticipated by the illustrious Chancellor of that Empire, who expressed a desire on the part of Russia that some attempt should be made to put an end to that chronic misunderstanding which seemed always to be recurring between the two countries of Great Britain and Russia. I do not, my lords, mean to say that there was at any time an intention of an alliance or a treaty, or a convention, but what we all seemed to desire was that, if possible, instead of hostile distrust, there should be, at least, some approximation to confidence, and that when any occurrences of a controversial character took place in those parts of the world where the interests of Russia and England clashed, there should be, at least, a friendly and candid communication of views between the two Powers which might remove causes which were not at all adequate reasons for misunderstanding. Well, my lords, when we returned to England, I think I expressed the sentiments which my noble colleague would have expressed on this matter. I took the earliest opportunity of declaring in this House that those circumstances

which had occurred in Central Asia with reference to efforts of Russia the avowed object of which was to embarrass and disturb English interests in that part of the world—I say I took the earliest opportunity of announcing in this House that, so far as those preparations had been made by Russia with the belief that war was immediately pending between the two countries, we found that we had no cause to complain, and that we were willing to forget and wished to forget all that had occurred in that respect.¹ And in consequence a formal communication of our views, which I do not doubt will be found in the annals of the Foreign Office, was made on the subject, and we received, as I stated at the time, an answer from St. Petersburg of the most satisfactory kind—in fact, expressing all those views and sentiments which Prince Gortchakoff, the Chancellor of the Empire, had expressed at the Congress.

Your lordships are aware that within a short time there has been laid upon your table a correspondence,² which has been described as a sinister correspondence, and which has for so long a time been the subject of interest, I would say of suppressed interest, in many political circles. Your lordships may remark that at the end of that correspondence the present Russian ambassador alludes in a summary to a despatch of Count Schouvaloff, in which there is a long quotation or summary of what I had expressed to Count Schouvaloff in a conversation. I am sure, my lords, that nobody who took up those papers would believe that it was a publication which had been for a long time suppressed even at Cabul, with an account of the Russian ambassador's interview with me, entirely condoning the past and approving everything that Russia had done. They could see no reason for the publication of that

¹ *Vide supra.*

² Correspondence between Shere Ali and the Foreign Minister on one side, and Generals Kaufman and Stolietoff on the other, which was found at Cabul by General Roberts in the autumn of 1879, disclosing the existence of a secret treaty between the Ameer and Russia, most hostile to the interests of this country, and signed after the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin. Letters written to the Ameer by these Russian agents directly instigating them to attack us and to excite a general Mahomedan rising against our power in India, formed part of the collection, and constituted a complete justification of our invasion of Afghanistan in November 1878.

despatch. But, my lords, if you look at the date of the despatch you will find that it was in November, 1878, whereas the despatches between the Russian authorities and the Ameer which were discovered after the second capture of Cabul were not obtained by the British Government until exactly a year afterwards—namely, October or November, 1879. And therefore it does appear to me most extraordinary that while the despatch of Count Schouvaloff giving an account of his interview with me, condoning the conduct of the Russian Government under certain conditions and circumstances which are almost *verbatim* what I did express in this House about a month before—that anyone could think there was any connection between those despatches so found a year afterwards at Cabul and that conversation.

Your lordships may also remark that in this curious publication there is in inverted commas what purports to be an announcement on my part that in my opinion the Government of India had forced our hands upon the subject of war, and had occasioned a declaration of war not only before it was necessary, but when it was, perhaps, altogether unnecessary. The case was exactly the opposite of that. Instead of Her Majesty's Government complaining of being forced by the Government of India to make war, that Government was most anxious to avoid war. We were appealed to by the Government of India to know what was our decision, as it fell upon them to make preparations for war, if war were decided upon; and when the affair came so near that the Government of India asked for its final instructions, it pledged itself voluntarily to make no single military operation without our sanction and advice. The English Government, as appears by the papers, were anxious to give Shere Ali a *locus penitentiae*, and instructed the Government of India to concede to him a period of three weeks to consider what he would do. We calculated every day, and considered the full time that would not interfere with military operations if they became necessary. My lords, I am quite certain that Count Schouvaloff was utterly incapable of misrepresentation as to anything I expressed to him. He was well known to every member of this House, a great ornament

of society, a most honourable man, and I supposed at the time that it must have been a misapprehension of the ambāssador. But I understand it referred, not to our hand being forced by the Government of India to go to war—that was absolutely absurd—but to the mission which two months before had been sent by the Indian Government, with the sanction of the English Government. Your lordships are well aware of the failure of that expedition; but the expedition was not an operation of war but a mission of peace, and we sent an individual who was the friend of Shere Ali, and who we believed would have succeeded in accomplishing a great object. It was absolutely necessary that I should call your lordships' attention to the fact that the alleged conversation with Count Schouvaloff appended to the papers discovered at Cabul took place in fact one year before they were discovered, and consequently that the expressions which excited my pain and surprise really referred to other subjects. I propose now to notice a remark as to why when these papers were discovered at Cabul they were not published by the late Government.

Certainly it would not have been in harmony with the existence of good feeling between the English plenipotentiaries and Prince Gortchakoff, if we took at the earliest opportunity a step which would not have tended to the cultivation of that friendly feeling between the two countries which was our object. Then we are asked why we consented to that publication. I am not the person who has consented to the publication, but the minister. I always took it for granted, from the extraordinary proceedings with regard to Afghanistan during the general election, that sooner or later there must have been a discussion on the subject. It was when in the frenzy of the hustings the country was enlightened on the subject of the war in Afghanistan, and when it was denounced by the late ministry as unnecessary and a great damage to the country—it was not until these expressions were used that we found that some steps should be taken on our part also to enlighten the country. Who could have supposed that our successors, with the Cabul papers, not published, but in their possession to guide them, should have announced in the manner they did that the whole of our policy

in Afghanistan should be repudiated? Our whole policy in Afghanistan is described as a monstrous romance, as if there had been no occasion for a single incident that occurred. Our recollection of the previous connection of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord Northbrook) with the Ameer, seemed to be entirely effaced from the memory of the nation. And, therefore, when my noble friend, the late Viceroy, found himself held up in so distorted a form to his country, it is not surprising that as a member of this House he should have taken an opportunity of calling your lordships' attention to the subject of these despatches.

Now, I would ask the Lord Privy Seal why he did not answer the two most important questions asked in this debate—they were asked by the noble viscount behind him. The first is, What do the Government mean to do with Candahar when they evacuate it in a month hence? The next question is, why we are not favoured with the opinion of Lord Ripon and his councillors? These are two questions which we have certainly a right to have answered. My noble friend (Lord Derby), who made a very animated speech—and I do not know there is anything that would excite enthusiasm in him except when he contemplates the surrender of some national possession—made a distinct point on that subject. He asked why we made such a great point of retaining Candahar at present, when we were willing when we made the Treaty of Gandamak to restore it to the native prince. The answer is clear. When we negotiated the Treaty of Gandamak our policy was to create a powerful and independent Afghanistan, and therefore everybody must feel that an attempt to retain Candahar must baffle and defeat that policy.

My lords, you have an old policy with regard to the relations of this country, India, and Afghanistan, which has been approved by all public men. Lord Lawrence, whom we always speak of with great respect, though the Lord Privy Seal says we systematically insulted him, was most decided in his policy that there should be an English interest in Afghanistan, and that Russian influence in it should not for a moment be tolerated. Well, what is your policy now? Where will English interests be when you have evacuated Afghanistan? What will be the

state of Afghanistan? It will be a state of anarchy. We have always announced, as a reason for interfering in Afghanistan, that we cannot tolerate a state of anarchy on our frontiers. Is not that an argument as good for Russia as for us? Will not the Russians say, 'Afghanistan is in a state of anarchy, and we cannot go on civilising Turkestan when Afghanistan is in a state of anarchy?' Therefore you are furnishing Russia with an occasion for advancing. When I speak of this policy of Russia, I do not speak of it in a hostile spirit. Russia has a right to its policy as well as England. Russia has as good a right to create an empire in Tartary, as we have in India. She must take the consequences if the creation of her empire endangers our power. I see nothing in that feeling on the part of England which should occasion any want of friendliness between this country and Russia. We must guard against what must be looked upon as the inevitable designs of a very great Power. When Lord Palmerston carried one of the greatest measures of his life—the fortification of the Channel, which was of much more importance than the retaining of Candahar—was that looked upon as a symbol of hostility to the French people? Everyone knows that Lord Palmerston was very friendly to the French alliance, and yet that was an operation directed immediately against France for the purpose of putting an end to the continual fluctuations of bluster and fear which such a situation as England was in at that time must necessarily entail.

I come now to the question of finance. I will not discuss whether Sir Henry Norman's helter-skelter estimates or those of other persons are the best or worst; but I will remind your lordships of this, that everything that has been alleged respecting the retention of Candahar and the consequent expense was said about the retention of the Punjaub. We heard when the retention of the Punjaub was proposed that it was impossible to raise any respectable revenue there; that the country was bare; that the population, compared with India, was sparse; and that it was quite impossible that the expenditure of our Government could be repaid. All these arguments were urged against annexation of any kind. But eventually you found a

very prosperous country in the Punjaub and Scinde, which proved a source of wealth and strength to India. I will not believe without much better proof that the retaining Candahar—the capital of an extremely fertile district—will entail upon you a result less satisfactory than the result of the retention of the Punjaub and Scinde. The *prima facie* evidence is, I think, in favour of a rich district paying its expenses, and, in time, probably paying more than its expenses.

There is another point connected with Candahar of which much has been made in this debate and on other occasions. It is said that we are debarred from annexing or retaining Candahar by our public declarations and agreements, and in the front of these is always placed the celebrated proclamation of the Queen when she accepted the sovereignty of India. I can speak with some confidence upon that subject, for, to a certain extent, I am responsible for that proclamation. It never entered into my head that there was anything in that proclamation which should prevent the Queen, if she went to war with a foreign Power, making such terms at the conclusion of peace as she might think fit, and availing herself of her power to take any provinces by right of conquest. The proclamation is essentially a domestic proclamation addressed to the princes of India, and the obligation of that proclamation has been most rigidly observed. There is no instance in which Her Majesty has been counselled to deviate from it, and I must repudiate the attempt to treat the Queen's proclamation on her assumption of the full sovereignty of India as a bar to the retention of Candahar if the Government should deem that retention wise and prudent. As to the observation that the commanding officers announced to the people that they were making war against princes only and not upon subjects, it may be easily disposed of. Such an announcement is an Oriental custom. In all the wars that have taken place of late—certainly in some of them—similar assurances have been given by the invading Power, but it has not prevented rich countries losing their capitals, and ancient empires being dislocated. In fact, you can generally drive a coach-and-six through declarations of that kind.

I have now touched upon the principal points in this question of the retention of Candahar. I confess that I have not heard an answer to the speeches of my noble friend who introduced this subject to your notice, of the noble marquis (Lord Salisbury), and of the noble viscount who addressed your lordships first this evening. It will not be unreasonable if I repeat a few points on which we lay particular stress. We want to know why we are not favoured with the views of Lord Ripon and his council, and what scheme the Government have in view if they evacuate Candahar in the short space of time announced—namely, in less than a month. Noble lords opposite cheered the noble lord who addressed us from those benches with so much power, and who seemed to admit that he would be satisfied if Candahar were to be retained for a certain period of time. Well, there is nothing unusual in retaining possession of a considerable town or province until the country, after great disquietude, war, and revolution, has subsided into comparative tranquillity. That is not an Oriental practice. It has been practised in some countries in Europe. There have been such things as military occupations before the present time. If the Government had come forward and announced that they intended to give up almost everything that we had obtained, but that in the present state of Afghanistan they did not see their way to leave Candahar, though they did not think fit to appropriate it absolutely, I should still have regretted their not annexing Candahar, but I should have felt that they were making a reasonable and statesmanlike suggestion, which should be received with attention. Such a course would have received the respectful consideration of this House. I think that it becomes the House of Lords to express its opinion upon this subject. I had myself believed that even if we abandoned Candahar we should still be able to retain our Indian Empire. I do not think that it is absolutely essential to us. There are several places which are called the keys of India. There is Merv. I do not know whether that place has yet been taken by the Russians. Perhaps the First Lord of the Admiralty will be able to inform us.

The Earl of Northbrook: It is not a seaport.

The Earl of Beaconsfield: No, it is not a seaport. Still, there is Merv; then there is a place whose name I forget; there is Ghuzni; then there is Bulkh, then Candahar. My opinion is that, though such places may not be essential to us, yet that I should regret to see any great military Power in possession of them—I should look upon such an event with regret, and perhaps with some degree of apprehension; but if the great military Power were there, I trust we might still be able to maintain our empire. But my lords, the key of India is not Herat or Candahar. The key of India is London. The majesty and sovereignty, the spirit and vigour of your Parliament, the inexhaustible resources, the ingenuity and determination of your people—these are the keys of India. But, my lords, a wise statesman would be chary in drawing upon what I may call the arterial sources of his power. He would use selection, and would seek to sustain his empire by recourse to local resources only, which would meet his purpose. You have always observed that system in this country for the last hundred years. You have skilfully appropriated many strong places in the world. You have erected a range of fortifications; you have overcome countries by the valour of your soldiers and the efforts of your engineers. Well, my lords, I hope that we shall pursue the same policy. If we pursue the same policy, Candahar is eminently one of those places which would contribute to the maintenance of that empire. It is advisable to retain it on economical grounds, as it is now held by us; and, as my noble friend said in his speech, would it be a becoming course for us now to withdraw, when the fact that the power of England can be felt promptly and on the spot is the best security for peace, and the best security for peace must be the best defence in case of war?

The views taken by my noble friend¹ below the gangway are essentially erroneous views, and in no one point are they more erroneous, I think, than in what he said of the opportunity which the House of Lords now has of expressing its opinion. I do not wish in any way to maintain an exaggerated view. Feeling myself keenly upon the question of Candahar, I

¹ Lord Derby

believe there is a real and a deep feeling, and, what is more, an increasing feeling, on the subject. The subject is being more considered, opinion will become more matured. There cannot be, therefore, a more legitimate occasion for the Peers of England to come forward and to give to the country the results of their wisdom and their experience, as I hope they will to-night, in reference to the Empire of India.



PART III. *IRELAND.* ---

IRISH ELECTION PETITIONS (MAIDEN SPEECH)	DEC. 7, 1837.
ARMS BILL, IRELAND	AUG. 9, 1843.
AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS	FEB. 1, 1849.
THIRD READING IRISH CHURCH BILL	MAY 31, 1869.
SPEECH ON ADDRESS	FEB. 8, 1870.
SECOND READING IRISH LAND BILL .	MARCH 11, 1870.
WESTMEATH COMMITTEE	FEB. 27, 1871.
IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BILL.	MARCH 11, 1873.
COMPENSATION FOR DISTURBANCE BILL	AUG. 3, 1880.
PROTECTION TO PERSON AND PROPERTY BILL	MARCH 1, 1881.



IRISH ELECTION PETITIONS. December 7, 1837.¹

MAIDEN SPEECH.

[The first Parliament of Queen Victoria assembled on November 13, 1837, and on December 6 the attention of the House was called by Mr. Smith O'Brien to 'the existence of an Election Subscription Fund, carried on for several months in England and Scotland for the purpose of encouraging the presentation of petitions against members returned to serve in the present Parliament for the counties, cities, towns, and boroughs of Ireland, and of defraying the expenses attendant upon the conduct and prosecution of the same.' The result was that on the following day a debate took place on the subject, Mr. Smith O'Brien moving for a Select Committee 'to inquire into the allegations' contained in the petition aforesaid. The motion was opposed both by the Government and the Opposition, and supported of course by the Irish members. Sir Francis Burdett, then member for North Wilts, was one of the offenders aimed at, and his speech was answered by O'Connell. When O'Connell sat down the new member for Maidenstone rose. The earlier part of the following speech, at all events, seems sensible and practical enough; but that in some way or another the speaker, before he had done, succeeded in making himself ridiculous, is a fact too well attested to be doubted.]

MR. DISRAELI rose and said, that he trusted the House would extend to him that gracious indulgence which was usually allowed to one who solicited its attention for the first time. He had, however, had sufficient experience of the critical spirit which pervaded the House, to know and to feel how much he stood in need of that indulgence—an indulgence of which he would prove himself to be not unworthy, by promising not to abuse it. The honourable and learned member

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

for Dublin¹ had taunted the honourable baronet, the member for North Wiltshire,² with having uttered a long, rambling, wandering, jumbling speech. Now, he must say—and he could assure the honourable and learned gentleman that he had paid the utmost attention to the remarks which flowed from him—that it seemed to him that the honourable and learned gentleman had taken a hint from the honourable baronet in the oration which the honourable and learned gentleman had just addressed to the House. There was scarcely a single subject connected with Ireland which the honourable and learned member had not introduced into his rhetorical medley. The honourable and learned member for Dublin had also taunted the honourable and learned member for Exeter³ with travelling out of the record of the present debate, while he himself had travelled back 700 years, though the House was engaged in the discussion of events which had taken place within the last few months.

The honourable and learned member had favoured the House with an allusion to poor-laws for Ireland. Perhaps he was wrong; but at all events there had been an allusion to the Irish Corporation Bill. He did not pretend that he could accurately remember all the topics the honourable and learned member had introduced into his speech; but, if no reference had been made by the honourable and learned gentleman to the subject of Irish poor-laws, at least there had been a dissertation upon the measure relating to the municipal corporations of Ireland. Was that subject relative to the debate before the House? He would not allude—for he would spare the feelings of the honourable and learned member in that respect—to the subscriptions which the honourable and learned member had told the House had not been successful on his side; but that circumstance might account for the bitterness with which he spoke of the successful efforts of the much-vilified Mr. Spottiswoode.⁴ He had, indeed, been much inclined

¹ Mr D. O Connell

² Sir Francis Bartlett

³ Sir William Follett

⁴ After the return of the new Parliament in the summer of 1837, it was alleged that many of the Irish returns which were favourable to the O Connell party were attributable to intimidation and corruption, and on the ground of

to ask the honourable member for Limerick (Mr. O'Brien) if he had attended the meeting at which it had been expected that every Liberal member would subscribe 50*l.* to the protection fund. He had thought that perhaps the honourable member could have given some curious information upon that subject; that, though there might have been 3,000*l.* or 2,950*l.* to begin with, there was now nothing in the exchequer, and that this project of majestic mendicancy had now wholly vanished. The honourable and learned member for Dublin had announced that the Spottiswoode subscription was a Protestant subscription. That it was supported by many Protestants nobody could attempt to deny, but if the honourable and learned member meant to say that it was a subscription established for the particular object of supporting a Protestant faction against the Catholic people, he begged to remark that he saw nothing at all to justify that supposition. It might be a Protestant, but it was essentially a defensive fund.

The honourable and learned member for Dublin had talked of the clergymen of the Church of England subscribing to this fund, and had contrasted their conduct with that of the priests of his Church; but he defied the honourable and learned member to produce a single instance of tyrannical interference on the part of the Protestant clergy at all similar, or in the least degree analogous, to those acts which were imputed to the clergy of the Catholic Church. If the honourable and learned member doubted what he was saying, let him refer to the volume of evidence taken before the Intimidation Committee, and the honourable member would see that from Cornwall to Yorkshire no case had occurred that bore a comparison to the occurrences in Ireland, and that he was fully justified in the statements he made. The object of the subscription entered into was to procure justice for the Protestant constituencies and the Protestant proprietors of Ireland, those constituencies and those proprietors being unable to obtain justice single-handed. Honourable members knew very well

it was resolved to contest them. A public subscription was opened to defray the expenses; and at the head of the committee of management appeared the name of Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode, the Queen's printer.

that a landlord in Ireland had been told by his tenants that they could not vote for him because their priest had denounced him from the altar. They knew very well that when it was attempted to reinforce the strength of the Protestant constituency in the registration courts, some revising or assistant barrister from the Castle of Dublin was easily found to baffle it, and thus were they forced on to their last resource and refuge—to a committee of that House.

Now was this a petition which had the downfall of the Catholics for its object? For his part, he thought that the facts which had been brought before the notice of the Intimidation Committee perfectly justified the use of the epithets which had been employed in the original circular or manifesto of Mr Spottiswoode. He should not trouble the House at any length. He did not affect to be insensible to the difficulty of his position, and he should be very glad to receive indulgence even from the honourable members opposite. If, however, honourable gentlemen did not wish to hear him, he would sit down without a murmur. He should confine himself to an attempt to bring back the subject to the point which was really at issue. He could not comprehend why a considerable body of Her Majesty's subjects respectable not only for their numbers, but for their independence and integrity, should be held up to scorn and odium by the honourable and learned member for Dublin, for the commission of an act the legality of which he had not presumed to question, of the propriety of which they were as competent judges as that honourable and learned member, and of which, after what he had himself confessed, the honourable and learned member ought to be the last to question the delinquency.

He had examined the list of contributors, as well as the honourable and learned member for Dublin, and with a more than ordinary degree of interest, arising from the fact that the town which he represented had contributed a larger proportion of the fund than any part of England, and he did not find that the subscribers principally consisted of members of the aristocracy. With very few exceptions they were to be found among the middle classes—men of moderate opinions and of a temperate

tone of mind—men, in fact, who seldom stepped out of the sphere of their private virtues—men, as honourable gentlemen who had examined these lists must know, who seldom partook of the excitement created by the conflict of parties, and were rarely inflamed by the passions which agitated the political world. He must say that he thought it a very strange thing that so large a body of individuals, many of whom were constitutional Reformers, many of whom, until very lately, supported Her Majesty's Government—he must repeat, that he considered that it would be very hard, very unjust, very impolitic to appoint a committee of inquiry, which would be equivalent to a verdict against those individuals, without first inquiring what were the feelings which induced them to pursue the line of conduct which they had adopted. He would remind the House that those individuals, many of whom supported the Reform Bill, might have entertained hopes in reference to the working of that measure which, like the hopes cherished by some honourable gentlemen opposite, might have been disappointed. They might have entertained an expectation that nomination would be at an end, that the stain of boroughmongering would be wiped out, and that not a remnant of the system would remain in a Reformed Parliament. But when they found that the stain of boroughmongering assumed a deeper and a darker hue, that seats were openly bought and sold, and that a system of intimidation was organised, compared with which the riots which even under the old system exhibited the more flagrant features of electoral operations, were peaceable—when they found that this was the case, they perhaps thought that it was time to bring matters to a head.

He had but one more observation to make, and he confessed he was rather anxious to make that observation, as it would give him the first opportunity which had been afforded him of saying something with respect to Her Majesty's Government. He wished he could induce the House to give him five minutes. It was not much. He stood there to-night not formally, but in some degree virtually, as the representative of a considerable number of members of Parliament. Now, why smile? Why envy him? Why not let him enjoy

that reflection, if only for one night? Did they forget that band of 158 new members, that ingenuous and inexperienced band, to whose unsophisticated minds the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer addressed himself early in the session in those dulcet tones of winning pathos which had proved so effective? He knew that considerable misconception existed in the minds of many of that class of members on the Opposition side of the House in reference to the conduct of Her Majesty's Government with respect to elections. He would not taunt the noble lord opposite with the opinions which were avowed by his immediate followers, but certain views were entertained and certain calculations were made with respect to those elections about the time when the bell of our cathedral announced the death of our monarch. We had all then heard of the projects said to be entertained by the Government, and a little accurate information on the subject would be very acceptable, particularly to the new members on the Opposition side of the House.

We had been told that reaction was a discovery that only awoke derision, that the grave of Toryism was dug, and that the funeral obsequies of Toryism might be celebrated without any fear of its resuscitation, that the much-vilified Peel Parliament was blown to the winds, when Mr Hudson rushed into the chambers of the Vatican. He did not impute these sanguine views to the noble lord himself, for he had subsequently favoured the public with a manifesto, from which it would appear that Toryism could not be so easily defeated. It was, however, vaunted that there would be a majority of 100, which upon great occasions might be expanded to 125 or 130. That was the question. They wished to know the simple fact whether, with that majority in the distance, they then thought of an alteration in the Grenville Act, and whether it was then supposed that impartial tribunals might be obtained for the trial of election petitions. If honourable gentlemen thought thus, he would submit. He would not do so to others, that was all. Nothing was so easy as to laugh. He wished, before he sat down, to show the House clearly their position. When they remembered, that in spite of the support of the honourable and

learned member for Dublin and his well-disciplined band of patriots, there was a little shyness exhibited by former supporters of Her Majesty's Government; when they recollected the 'new loves' and the 'old loves,' in which so much of passion and recrimination was mixed up between the noble Tityrus of the Treasury bench and the learned Daphne of Liskeard—notwithstanding the *amantium ira* had resulted, as he had always expected, in the *amoris integratio*—notwithstanding that political duel had been fought, in which more than one shot was interchanged, but in which recourse was had to the secure arbitrament of blank cartridges—notwithstanding emancipated Ireland and enslaved England, the noble lord might wave in one hand the keys of St. Peter, and in the other—(the shouts that followed drowned the conclusion of the sentence). 'Let them see the philosophical prejudices of man.' He would certainly gladly hear a cheer, even though it came from the lips of a political opponent. He was not at all surprised at the reception which he had experienced. He had begun several times many things, and he had often succeeded at last. He would sit down now, but *the time would come when they would hear him.* (*The impatience of the House would not allow the honourable member to finish his speech, and during the greater part of the time the honourable member was on his legs, he was so much interrupted that it was impossible to hear what the honourable member said.*)—HANSARD.

ARMS BILL (IRELAND) August 9, 1843

[On April 29, in consequence of the disturbed state of Ireland resulting from the Repeal movement, leave was given to bring in a Bill on the above subject, and on August 9, on the third reading, Mr Disraeli, after remarking that Sir Robert Peel had changed front so completely on his Irish policy that his followers must now shift for themselves, and were released from all obligations to support him, went on to give an historical sketch of the relations of the Tory party to Ireland. In this assertion of independence he was joined by Lord John Manners, Mr Smyth, Mr B Cochrane, and others, and it may be interesting at this distance of time to recall the impression produced upon the public mind by this first open declaration of hostility to Sir R. Peel's Government¹. The following extract is from a leading article in the 'Morning Chronicle' of August 11 —

'Amid all the false heartedness of public men, and all the duplicity which has poisoned public spirit, it is cheering to remark, from the conduct of the young men on the Tory Benches, that there is, in the eloquent words of the member for Shrewsbury, some hope "that the time will come when a party will be formed in this country on the principle of justice to Ireland—justice, not by quailing before agitation, not by adopting in despair the first quack remedy offered on either side, but by really putting an end to that misery which long misgovernment had produced—that misery which was the real cause of all the evil of Ireland, and which until it was put an end to, would not cease to be the bane of England and the opprobrium of Europe"'

The next is from the 'Times' of August 17 —

'It appears that some honourable members who have come lately into notice, and, we will add, into favourable notice—so far at least as honourable character and talent is concerned—choose to combine with a general declared support of the administration, opposition to it upon certain particular subjects. Lord John Manners, Mr Smyth, Mr Disraeli, Mr Cochrane, and others, animadverted during the late debate upon the policy of ministers, and on Tuesday night Mr

¹ Cf. Introduction to Speech, June 17, 1844

Disraeli reflected upon some of the measures of Government in the Servian affair. Upon this Lord Sandon rose up and made a furious attack upon Mr. Disraeli for daring to show such disagreement with Government, and went on to make most invidious and uncalled-for observations upon other honourable members who had been recently using the same liberty.

‘Is it really come to this, that in a House of Commons, in which every man has for years and years thought himself at full liberty to talk as much nonsense as he likes, for as long as he likes, gentlemen of some sense and talent are not to be allowed to express their opinions upon points, whether of foreign or Irish legislation, without being taunted and silenced? Is the Magna Charta of the House to be invaded, and that at the expense of speakers who really have not as yet needed its indulgence? Have these gentlemen, we ask, spoken more diffusely, tediously, lengthily than they should? If they had, the example of members would have borne them out; but we do not hear that they have. When they have spoken, they have spoken to the point, and because they had something to say. Everybody allows this.

‘It is not to defend “Young England,” who are amply able to defend themselves, that we make these remarks, but to maintain the principle of free and fair debate against such attempts to cow and bully as have been lately exhibited. It is not for the benefit of the public, or really for the minister himself (however much for his temporary convenience), that he should be completely independent of and above all questions from his own party. Above all, it is not for the public good that *any* talent should be kept down, and excluded from a fair field of exercise and training which the debates afford. The country is not in a state to dispense with any rising intellect and vigour—any heads that give promise. The latter may not be ready for service yet—most public men require years of labour and drudgery to bring them into action. There may be ideas that require maturing and principles that require moulding and accommodating, before they can be brought to bear upon the present state of things. Parties have been stiffened into a certain attitude for the last two centuries, and certain men seem wanted politically, and others not, and that is all that your superficial statesman says. But who knows when a thaw and loosening may come—when older heads may have gone, new events may have happened, and new modes of thinking may be demanded and come into play?’

Apropos of a leading article which appeared in the ‘Times’ of August 11, Mr. Disraeli addressed the following letter to the editor:—

'SIR,—Your paper of to-day contains a leading article very ingeniously written, but which is entirely founded upon error

'You describe me as having "ungenerously reproached the Prime Minister, in the late debate on the Irish Arms Bill, for the failure of his industrial measures"—a reproach which, you justly observe, came with ill grace from a member who had voted for the tariff and the new Corn Law last year, and who had energetically defended them before his constituents during the present

'A typographical error has misled you The reproach which you have ascribed to me, and which was noticed by Sir Robert Peel, was urged by the honourable member for Liskeard

'I voted for "the industrial measures" of Sir Robert Peel last year, and defended them during the present, because I believed, and still believe, that they were founded on sound principles of commercial policy principles which were advocated by that great Tory statesman, Lord Bolingbroke, in 1713, principles which, in abeyance during the Whig Government of seventy years, were revived by that great Tory statesman, Mr Pitt, and, though their progress was disturbed by war and revolution, were faithful to the traditional policy of the Tory party, sanctioned and developed on the return of peace and order, by Lord Liverpool

'It is not merely with reference to commercial policy that I believe that a recurrence to old Tory principles would be of great advantage to this country It is a specific in my opinion, and the only one, for many of those disquietudes which now perplex our society I see no other remedy for that war of classes and creeds which now agitates and menaces us, but in an earnest return to a system which may be described generally as one of loyalty and reverence of popular rights and social sympathies—I have the honour to be, Sir,

'Your faithful servant,

'BENJAMIN DISRAELI

'Grosvenor Gate Park Lane August 11 1843]

MR DISRAELI said, that, when in opposition, the ministerial party had been accused of making Ireland their *chéval de bataille* to slide into office upon It had been made a heinous offence in them, that they had supported the Registration Bill of the noble lord, now the Secretary for the Colonies¹ In lending his support to that Bill, he would not deny that he had looked upon it as a party question, still he had thought that good cause had been shown for the measure, and in this belief he

¹ Lord Stanley

had been strengthened when he found the Bill received the support of persons from whom his own party were little in the habit of receiving support. When he found himself going out in a division with the noble lord the member for Sunderland,¹ and the honourable gentleman the member for Halifax,² he scarcely thought the time would ever come when, for his support of that Bill, he should be held to have been guilty of factious opposition to the Government. The House would recollect that, in the course of a protracted opposition, the right honourable baronet selected two questions, by which he led the country to believe that, if he came into power, his system of government in Ireland might be, in some degree, anticipated. These two measures were, the Reform of the Municipal Institutions, and a measure for the Registration of Voters. What had been the conduct of the right honourable gentleman with respect to these two measures since he had been in power? After a struggle of many years, the right honourable gentleman entered office on the strength of his policy with respect to Ireland; for it was not to be denied that the divisions on the Irish Registration Bill were the things that really overturned the late Government. The moment the right honourable gentleman was in office, he selected for the office of Secretary for Ireland a noble lord³ whom he (Mr. Disraeli) had long known and always highly esteemed, but the selection of that noble lord was a virtual admission on the part of the right honourable gentleman that he had been wrong in the course he had pursued when in opposition with respect to the question of municipal reform.

Very shortly after the right honourable gentleman came into power, he took an opportunity to announce that the subject of the registration of voters in Ireland, a question on which so much interest was felt throughout the country, would not be proceeded with; not only that the Bill of the noble lord was not to be resumed, but that no measure of a similar character would be brought forward. The right honourable gentleman thus admitted that his course, while in opposition,

¹ Lord Howick.

² Mr. C. Wood, afterwards Sir Charles Wood.

³ Lord Eliot.

as far as this measure was concerned, was diametrically wrong, and that those to whom he had been opposed had acted correctly. He did not blame the right honourable gentleman for this conduct. If the right honourable gentleman thought that the line he had taken in opposition was not one which a minister of this country could adopt, the right honourable gentleman had taken a right and prudent course in abandoning it when he came into office. But he drew this inference, which he thought was a most important one, that, as regarded Irish policy, they who were the followers and supporters of the right honourable gentleman were now left to themselves. That was, he thought, the plain, the irresistible conviction that must press itself on the mind of every honourable gentlemen who sat on that side of the House. For a number of years they had supported the right honourable gentleman on these two important subjects. The right honourable gentleman succeeded to office mainly on account of the line he had taken in opposition on those two subjects, and he had virtually announced to the House and the country, that he had been in error. He gave the right honourable gentleman full credit for the sincerity of his conviction; but having now no guide on the subject of Ireland, no means of forming an opinion—Ireland being in a state which challenged and demanded some opinions—he said they were plainly free from any bonds of party on the subject, for the right honourable gentleman himself had broken them, and they had a right, they were, in fact, bound, to form their own opinion of what they considered really, in the sincerity of their conviction, was most adapted to the advantage of the two countries.

He said this, because it was, in fact, a course which was necessary to prevent gentlemen on that side of the House from being stultified by the position in which they were placed. To many, no doubt, it would have been very convenient that Ireland should have remained in a state of great tranquillity, and that they should not have been forced to give an opinion on the subject. He was sure that many who supported the right honourable gentleman would have felt it much more agreeable

to avoid any Irish discussion; but being told by the right honourable gentleman himself that he had unfortunately been a blind guide in opposition on the subject of Ireland, they must not look to him, nor to the views he announced, as orthodox. When the House, therefore, saw members of his Government come forward and propose a measure which compelled the House to consider the state of Ireland, what remained for them but to form the best opinion they could, without the advantage of any official light, on this the most important subject in the modern policy of this country? At least they must endeavour to form an opinion which, if not absolutely sound, might not be so totally devoid of all pretensions to wise policy as that which for a number of years they had adopted, and which they had the misfortune to find, on the announcement of their leader, was in fact perfectly erroneous.

An honourable gentleman on his side of the House had taken a view of what he considered the duty of his party on the subject of Ireland, at which some members seemed to have been surprised, and he defended these views by holding them up as the old Tory doctrines, the legitimate doctrines of the party with which he was connected. He knew that that statement was historically true, and he believed it to be politically just. But there was no anarchy greater, no principle if followed out would be more fatal to the policy of this country, and to the character of public men, than to suppose that the two great parties which had governed the State were mere factions, without distinctive principles, and absolute differences in their policy. He was sure honourable gentlemen opposite, from whom he differed, were the last men who would attempt to controvert an opinion of that kind. Their leader, who was unfortunately not then present, had on more than one occasion given what he might call a pedigree of patriotism, proud of the great measures which, in the course of the last two hundred years, the party with which he was connected had introduced and carried. The noble lord had given the House his view of the character of those measures, and the consequences to which they had led; and they were, he did not for a moment hesitate to admit, great measures, of

which a party might well be proud, and which none but great men, so numerous in the political history of this country, could have framed.

He contended, also, that the party with which he was connected, had held great distinctive principles, and carried them out. He said, too, that those principles, at different periods, had been advocated by men as great, and by peers as eloquent, as any that had adorned the party on the other side. But he said, when that party was left in the lurch by their own leader, when he threw up the reins, and told them he had made a mistake, and that he could give them no further advice, and that the policy he pursued was perfectly erroneous, it was their duty to remember the original principles of the party with which they were connected, and he for one could not find in the history of that party any grounds for assuming that hostility to the Irish people was a distinctive ingredient of what was called Tory policy. He found the fact to be exactly the reverse. He knew that there had been monarchs as Protestant as any that could exist—as Protestant as any under whom he, for one, could wish to live. In the time of that great queen, Elizabeth, to whom they so often appealed, in the time of another monarch of whose Protestantism the Church of England would not doubt, since she canonised him as a saint, and revered him as a martyr, that was not the policy pursued, these were not the sentiments encouraged with respect to the Roman Catholic population of Ireland.

They had heard another sight of the Treaty of Limerick; but no one reminded the House, when it entered on the subject of the Irish Church, of the secret articles of the famous Glamorgan treaty, one of which contained a scheme for the adjustment of the claims of the rival churches, which had never been broached in debate in that House. That clause alone showed what was the feeling of those whose amity to the Church of England could not be doubted on the delicate and important subject of the claims of the Irish Church. He could not observe that at any later period of our history, whenever those questions had been discussed, whenever what was called

the Tory party had had the preponderance in the State, that any other line of policy had been adopted. It was true that circumstances had occurred to which he merely referred for illustration, because he did not wish to introduce the bitterness of party into this debate. The Whig party for seventy years had the command of the Government, and the course of their policy was hostile to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. That was an historical fact which no one could controvert. But even at the time when the Tory party was overthrown, and proscribed, and when it was led by an attainted and exiled leader, principles were always advocated in harmony with those to which he had referred, and on all occasions of political contest the Roman Catholic population of this country supported the claims of the Tory party. He said this because at a time like this it was necessary to recur to the principles which were the foundation of the party, when those who had been its leaders no longer led it, and they found themselves sinking into a faction, degenerating into the lowest position in which a public man could be placed—when, in fact, they were supporting a ministry without knowing what principles they were maintaining.

He wished to enforce this position on the House, because he thought there was nothing more strange than that the gentlemen of England, those who were the descendants of the cavaliers, should in fact always be advocates for governing Ireland on the principles of the Roundheads. At present, the state of Ireland forced itself upon their attention. He was not going, at this period of the session, to descant on the grievances of Ireland or the empirical remedies which had been proposed to cure them; but he wished to remind the House of the subjects brought before them, and pressed on their attention by the popular voice. There was the tenure of land, a question which had shaken empires to their centres, and occasioned more revolutions than any other cause. There was the maintenance of the poor, electoral rights, the claims of the rival churches, whether you should maintain one line of ecclesiastical policy, or substitute another. Whether these were genuine grievances, founded on absolute necessity, or

merely the fantastical inventions of those who were called agitators, it was a fact that such questions were mooted, that such questions interested millions, and that was enough to show that the state of such a country demanded the most serious attention. What was the consideration which the statesmen of the present day gave to these questions? They had announced to the House, almost in an ostentatious manner, that they intended to do nothing, because to do nothing was in their minds the wisest policy.

Now, if one could suppose for a moment that the curtain would fall upon Ireland as it fell in a theatre when a certain number of acts had been performed, one might conceive that those gentlemen who formed the present cabinet had some foundation for the policy which they had stated it was their intention to pursue. They reasoned, they acted, as if the moment that Parliament was prorogued Ireland must be tranquillised; that, in fact, the present agitation was a sort of *divertissement* got up to form the materials of debate. He heard almost a silent cheer, as if that was a version of the movement now in progress accepted by some one; but to believe that, they must reject all the facts that had come to their knowledge, and throw aside all the evidence on which their information was founded. He had a right to suppose that this immense agitation, which was confessed by ministers to exist, and the causes of which they said they were not prepared to remove, would still subsist, and even be aggravated. He knew that it was said this remarkable conduct, this paralysis of policy, which was now fashionable, was, in fact, occasioned by a dissension in the cabinet. That had been alleged, in more than one quarter; it had always been his opinion, and he had his reasons for it. They were not reasons of any confidential nature, and, therefore, he had a right to state them.

He had never heard of a cabinet yet, since the institution of cabinets, in which there was not a dissension. He defied any man to go through the history of cabinets, from Stanhope to the Pelhams, and from the Pelhams to the Pitts, and to find one which had gone on for twenty-four months without very serious and even fatal dissension. In modern times

even the right honourable gentleman himself entered the cabinet through a dissension. He was not in the cabinet, and it was wished he should be, and one morning, without the slightest preparation, the Secretary of State ¹ found that he was no longer Secretary, and the right honourable gentleman became Secretary in his place. Even in the most quiet times, in the cabinet presided over by the patient and benignant genius of Lord Liverpool, dissensions sprung up in the cabinet. Lord Castlereagh died, and a series of bickerings took place. Mr. Canning entered the cabinet; dissensions soon took place relative to the introduction of Mr. Huskisson; and when Mr. Canning died, in a moment all the suppressed evil passions broke forth, and from that time to the present there never had been twelve months without dissensions in the cabinet.

The right honourable gentleman's own cabinet did not exist more than a few months before dissensions took place, and an eminent person who was a member of the cabinet left it; and they had a right to believe that there were dissensions now. They had the Lord Chancellor of England declaring in the House of Lords that meetings held to petition for the repeal of the legislative union were illegal; and they had it declared to the House of Commons, by order of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, that those meetings were perfectly legal, provided they were peaceable. The Leader of the Government in another House was chalking 'No Popery' on the walls, while the leader of the Government in that House told them that he, for himself, cared nothing about Protestant or Papist—*Tros Tyriusve*—he did not care what a man believed, and meant to be strictly impartial. When they found systems so inconsistent—policy so totally opposed—alike only in one great result, imbecility of the most lamentable nature, he had a right to believe that there were dissensions in the cabinet. He believed it, and he believed that they would destroy this or any other cabinet which did not address itself to the question of the Government of Ireland in a very different spirit. It was perfectly clear, if you destroyed the Protestant, and estab-

¹ Lord Sidmouth.

lished the Roman Catholic Church to-morrow, or chose any isolated remedies, one after the other, you would produce no improvement in the state of Ireland. It had arrived at that pitch which required a great man to have recourse to great remedial measures. It was not a single remedy, but a simultaneous adoption of all those which had been indicated, and many more might be indicated, which would restore Ireland to the state which every man, whether Irish or English, must feel to be desirable.

You must reorganise and reconstruct the Government, and even the social, state of Ireland. Nothing could prevent it—they might cry ‘question,’ but they would not cry question twelve months hence. It was not by having recourse to any of those measures brought forward in a great degree from party feeling, but in some degree, too, from sincere conviction, it was not by mere empirical remedies that they could give peace and contentment to Ireland. With respect to the present measure he had little to say. Well, he would give his reason. He did not wish to use a harsh term, and, therefore, he would refrain from saying that the measure considered with reference to the present state of Ireland, was contemptible. The opposition to such a measure, taken also with reference to the present state of Ireland, must naturally, in some degree, be entitled to the same epithet; but there were some measures which to introduce was disgraceful, and which to oppose was degrading. He had given no vote on this Bill one way or the other, and he should continue that course, being perfectly persuaded of its futility. Believing that Ireland was governed in a manner which conduced only to the injury of both countries; that the principles declared by ministers were not capable of relieving us from the difficult position in which we were placed; believing that the old principles of the party with which he was connected were quite competent, if pursued, to do that, he hoped the time would come when a party framed on true principles would do justice to Ireland, not by satisfying agitators—not by adopting, in despair, the first quack remedy that was offered from either

side of the House, but by really penetrating into the mystery of this great misgovernment, so as to bring about a state of society which would be advantageous both to England and Ireland, and which would put an end to a state of things that was the bane of England and opprobrium of Europe.

AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS. February 1, 1849.

[By the death of Lord George Bentinck in the previous autumn, Mr. Disraeli had now become leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. The brief but eloquent tribute to the memory of his deceased friend—alas, how appropriate to himself at the present moment!—which occurs early in the following speech is a signal example of the special felicity with which he expressed himself on such occasions.]

I AM sure, Sir, that Her Majesty, since her accession, has never delivered a gracious Speech to Her Parliament in which she has felt it her duty to allude to subjects of much greater importance than in that Speech to which we have listened to-day; but I am bound to say that both in that Speech which Her Majesty has been advised to address to her Parliament, and in that answer which has now been proposed for us to offer at the foot of the Throne, I do not find that a fair and candid statement is conveyed as to the condition of this country—not a candid statement either as regards the internal condition of this country or its external relations.

At this moment, important and numerous as are the subjects for our consideration, doubtless the most urgent would seem to be the state of Ireland. The language which I find in the note that I have made of the Speech, does not convey to me the impression that Her Majesty's ministers are of opinion that the state of Ireland requires any immediate remedy. The language is obscure; and if it can be satisfactorily explained, it will show the advantage of discussion in the present instance. I find it stated that 'the operation of the laws for the relief of the poor in Ireland will properly be a subject of early inquiry; and, any measures by which those laws may be beneficially amended, and the condition of the people

may be improved, will receive my cordial assent.' Now, I think it is of very great importance to know what Her Majesty's ministers mean to convey by the phrase 'early inquiry.' Is it an inquiry, for example, by a committee of the House of Commons? In that case the 'inquiry,' no doubt, might be early, but the conclusion most probably would be late. And why an inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons? We have had sufficient experience, I think, of what inquiries by committees of the House of Commons may accomplish upon subjects upon which an administration, duly informed, ought to have initiated measures. I do not see why, in the present instance, for example, the case of the Poor Law in Ireland should be an exception to that experience. You have a Poor Law Commission in Ireland; you have a Government Board in Ireland; and I want to know from what sources can the administration obtain more ample and satisfactory information than from such quarters? They ought to be in possession of the information; if they think there ought to be an alteration in the laws, they ought to be prepared to legislate upon that well-digested information. They have had sufficient time well to consider the authentic information that has reached them; and certainly, in the present state of Ireland, if the only measure that Her Majesty's ministers are about to bring forward with respect to that country is the proposition of an inquiry into the operation of the Poor Law by a Parliamentary committee, I think that is a course neither satisfactory nor statesmanlike.

I do not doubt for a moment—no one can—the urgency of the state of Ireland. Honourable gentlemen who represent that country have much to answer for, in my opinion, to their constituents. They have to consider whether the state of Ireland is merely brought about by the present operation of the Poor Laws—whether it may not have been in a great degree occasioned and aggravated by other measures which they supported, and by the non-adoption of other measures which they opposed—measures to which, by-and-by, they gave their private encouragement, and offered their public opposition. Therefore, when gentlemen representing Ireland come forward

and complain of the condition of Ireland, it is well that they should recollect how far they individually may be responsible for the present state of Ireland. I believe I see a gentleman opposite who represents a county in Ireland. I read a speech of his at a county meeting the other day; I read the reasons he alleged for the present condition of Ireland, and one of the weightiest was the repeal of the Corn Law in the year of our Lord 1846. But when I referred to the list of those who voted for that repeal, I found in it the name of that worthy knight of the shire. I think it is well for us to consider whether these circumstances—Irish members complaining so much who supported that repeal, and who opposed measures that were brought forward on this side of the House, though now privately encouraged at meetings holden by these very same members—are to be forgotten at this moment. I confess it is a subject upon which I have little inclination or heart to dwell upon on the present occasion.

There was a policy once proposed in this House with respect to Ireland, which by the Irish members was defeated, but which, if it had been pursued, would have produced a very different effect from what we now see in that country—a policy which subsequently was partially pursued, even by the Government who then opposed it. The proposer of that policy is no longer among us. At a time when everything that is occurring vindicates his prescience and demands his energy, we have no longer his sagacity to guide or his courage to sustain us. In the midst of the Parliamentary strife, that plume can soar no more round which we loved to rally. But he has left us the legacy of heroes—the memory of his great name, and the inspiration of his great example.

IRISH CHURCH BILL. May 31, 1869.¹

(THIRD READING.)

MR. DISRAELI,—Whatever may be the condition of the Sustentation Fund² to which the honourable member alludes, the sustentation fund of this debate seems to be nearly exhausted. I trust, therefore, that the House will think that I have not intruded at too early a period, if I ask their permission to make a few observations before the vote is taken. I was struck recently when meeting a member of this House who has long been absent, and who, during that period, has filled, in a distinguished manner, eminent posts in the service of his Sovereign, by his remark that on returning to the House of Commons, after more than thirty years' absence, he found we were debating the very same subject as when he left it—Ireland! Ireland! Ireland! In those days, when the disorders and discontents of a portion of the Irish people were brought under the consideration of Parliament, there was only one specific for the grievances then alleged and the disturbances then felt. Statesman and agitator, Whigs and Tories, all agreed that the causes of these discontents and disturbances were political, and therefore the remedy for them must be of the same character.

So year after year specifics of that kind were brought forward by ministers—Parliamentary Reform, Municipal Reform, Jury Reform, great schemes of National Education, and great systems of National Police—all of them to ameliorate the con-

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

² Mr. Miller, the member for Edinburgh, had referred to the Sustentation Fund of the Free Kirk.

dition of the people of Ireland. Yet, nevertheless, this was ever discovered, that periodically, notwithstanding all these measures of improvement, Parliament found itself in the same position, and was obliged to introduce an Arms Bill or to pass an Insurrection Act, and this was because all public men and all parties persisted in shutting their eyes to the real cause of Irish disturbance and discontent. None of them would recognise that it was a physical cause, and produced by physical circumstances, which, probably, no statesman and no party could attempt to encounter or to remedy. Yet the simple cause is now better understood, and we know that that disturbance and that discontent were occasioned by this fact—that more than a quarter of the people of Ireland consisted of paupers, and paupers in a helpless condition. On a square mile in Ireland, with reference to the cultivated portion of the country, there was a population greater than is to be found in any European or even any Asiatic country. This population depended for their subsistence upon the humblest means that probably any race of men ever existed upon. All these facts are now recognised, and some light can be thrown on the state of Ireland. But at that period those who had to consider it were perplexed and appalled by the difficulties they had to encounter. They had recourse to political palliatives, and they trusted they might at least gain time.

When you conceive the position of a country where one-fourth, and more than one-fourth, of the population were paupers, and paupers in a helpless condition—when you know, as may be proved by documents on this table, that there were 600,000 families in Ireland who were only employed for twenty out of fifty-two weeks in the year—you can form some idea of a national condition which does not now prevail in any part of Europe. Recollect also that this population in this state of extreme adversity was not a stolid one, brutalised by their condition, as has sometimes happened in other parts of Europe, but a nation of much susceptibility, of quick feeling and imagination, ready to place themselves under the leading of any impassioned orator who called upon them to assemble and discuss the grievances of their country, or quick to yield to all the seditious machinery

which constitutes a secret society. And so you had in Ireland gigantic public meetings on a scale that never took place in any other country—as at Clontarf and Tara; or, on the other hand, you had Ribbon societies and organisations of that kind. All this time the country was governed by a peculiarly weak administration. With institutions which, from circumstances, were necessarily, even if of a beneficial kind, of a limited influence, you had to encounter elements of disorder and disturbance in Ireland with the weakest administration probably that ever was devised by man.

Well, now, under such circumstances everyone felt that the position of Ireland was one which would always constitute the difficulty of a British minister, and one of the most eminent of British ministers acknowledged that Ireland was his difficulty. He only acknowledged that that was his fate which was the destiny of every minister of every party who attempted to meet such circumstances, and everybody felt that nothing but some great event, impossible to contemplate, could possibly remedy a state of affairs so anomalous and irregular as that which prevailed in Ireland. A revolution might have produced the necessary consequences and changes in any other country; but a revolution in Ireland seemed impossible, and a human and political revolution was impossible in Ireland from its connection with England. But a revolution did take place. Not one of those great changes produced by political parties, because it was an event which destroyed parties; not produced by political passions, because it appeased and allayed all political passions—one of the most appalling events that have occurred in modern times, perhaps the most awful and appalling event that ever happened in any European country. The limited means of sustenance by which those 2,000,000 of hopeless paupers had existed suddenly vanished, as if stricken from the soil. They perished by thousands and tens of thousands. Emigration followed famine and disease. In the course of a year after that emigration you had to pass in this House an Act of Confiscation of many estates in that country, and, so far as revolution is concerned, there is no revolution of modern times which ever produced changes so extensive as were occa-

sioned by the famine, by the emigration, and by the Incumbered Estates Act passed in 1849 by this House

Well, Sir, when the two countries had somewhat recovered from these appalling circumstances, when the earthquake and the fire had passed, and the still small voice of counsel was heard, it did appear both to England and Ireland, that if ever there was an opportunity in which the terrible state that had so long prevailed might be terminated—when we could prevent its ever being repeated—that opportunity had arrived. Costly as may have been the price, great as may have been the sacrifice, there was, at least, some compensation in the conviction that, so far as the two countries were concerned, there was, at least, the opportunity of establishing a system different from that fatal condition which had, almost for centuries, baffled the devices of ministers and the noblest aspirations of a great people. Well, Sir, we can look back upon these events now, after a sufficient interval, which permits us to calculate with some accuracy the consequences. So far as the means offered, on the part of the English ministry, to effect the moral improvement of Ireland, I think it must be admitted there was little left to be done. For the last twenty years, I might even say forty years, but certainly since the period of these great disasters—the policy of the English Government to Ireland has ever been the same and consistent, whatever party has sat on the bench opposite. To secure the due administration of justice, to open to all creeds and to all races the fair career of merit, to soften, without having recourse to those violent changes which would alarm the interests, and, perhaps, outrage the feelings of any considerable part of the Irish people—to soften, I say, those anomalies which, as yet, prevailed in their social system—to mitigate and countervail them, that was the policy of the English Government, and whoever might form that Government, whatever party might sit on that bench, I repeat it, that was the system followed and has for years invariably prevailed.

That system, indeed, was established and pursued before the great calamities which occurred to Ireland in 1818, but even that system of advancing the moral improvement of

Ireland was, in some degree, assisted by these great calamities. They had occasioned a great interchange of sympathy between the two countries, most prominent at the time ; and indeed so deep, that at the present moment its effects are still felt. An English minister after the famine, if he brought forward any measure in this House the object of which was to assist the social improvement, or by moral means to ameliorate the condition, of Ireland, experienced less difficulties upon such a subject than he did before. There was no captiousness, no suspicion ; on the contrary, both sides exhibited on every occasion even an eagerness to support a policy of that kind. But, Sir, I admit that such a policy—a policy which had been pursued before these calamities—however constantly prosecuted, was not calculated to produce much effect on the physical condition of the Irish people. That depended, as I have indicated to the House, upon material causes.

Well, now, in that respect, what has happened to the Irish people since that time? I say we have the advantage of twenty years' experience to form an opinion as to the alterations in their condition which have occurred since their great calamity. In the first place their most considerable industry has been completely reorganised on conditions highly favourable to the labourers on the soil. I will not enter into any controversy now as to the degree to which agricultural wages have increased in Ireland, but gentlemen will admit that the increase has been considerable. If I were to refer to documents on our table, if I were to adduce the evidence of Bishop Doyle, if I were to go to a period much nearer—namely, the Reports of the Commissioners previous to the introduction of the Poor Law into Ireland—I could make statements to the House which would show, I think, that the increase of wages to agricultural labour in Ireland has been very considerable indeed. But I am not anxious to enter into a subject on which controversy might arise. I will say, therefore, that we may fairly assume that agricultural wages of labour in Ireland have probably doubled ; but what is a much more important consideration in respect to wages in Ireland, is that for the first time in that country you have had a system

of continuous labour; and, instead of 600,000 families which were not employed for more than twenty weeks in the year, you have the population employed not only at an increase of wages, but also in continuous labour. That is a most important fact as evidence of the amelioration in the condition of the people.

I will not enlarge on the circumstance that capital has been introduced into Ireland, and has been applied to the encouragement of manufactures; because, though that is an important consideration, the application of such capital is an advantage which must necessarily be the slowest realised. It is, however, undoubted, for we have evidence of the fact, that capital from England and Scotland has been applied to manufactures in Ireland during the last twenty years; but what is of greater moment in the condition of the people of Ireland, is that the trade of Ireland has been immensely increased during the same period; that the increase in the means of employing and enriching the people of that country by trade has probably been greater than, but certainly equal to, the improvement in the condition of the agricultural labouring classes. We know from the returns relating to shipping that the tonnago of Ireland has not merely doubled, but trebled, and in some parts quadrupled; and the increase of tonnage has not been confined to one or two parts, but has pervaded the whole country.

What, then, has been the general result of all these causes, so far as the condition of the people is concerned? The result is that there has disappeared from the country these 2,000,000 of hopeless paupers, whose existence there was a source of disturbance and discontent. I know that there are some who say that, though these statistical results cannot be fully denied, a great calamity has happened to Ireland in the reduction of its population. I have never been one of those who looked on the reduction of the population of Ireland as an advantage. I entirely agree with what was said by the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Abercorn, that you must take Ireland as you find it, with all its existing circumstances—its tenure of the land and its population—and you

must endeavour to govern Ireland with reference to those existing circumstances, and not with reference to abstract principles of political economy. I myself deplore the reduction in the population of Ireland, because I feel that the condition of the United Kingdom cannot be maintained in the scale of nations, unless it realises a certain amount of population; and, so far as I can form an opinion, that amount of population cannot be secured with a reduced contribution from Ireland. Therefore I look forward to the time when we shall see the population of Ireland increase from its increased resources, and reach again the point from which it was diminished, not in consequence of legislation, but from causes over which legislation had no control.

Well, such as I have described was the state of Ireland when the Fenian conspiracy broke out. We had had a revolution in Ireland—a revolution not brought about by human means; the condition of the country was entirely changed, and the cause of disturbance and discontent had disappeared. The country was recovering, was more than recovering—it had recovered, it was in a state of progressive improvement; the people were better fed and clothed, and, as the last step in the improvement of their condition, they were beginning to be better housed. The wealth of the country had immensely increased. Before the famine the stock of Ireland was worth little more than 20,000,000*l.*, and by the last Return it was estimated at 50,000,000*l.* Simultaneously with that increase there has been an increase in the arable cultivation of the country. Therefore, the allegation that the increase of wealth has been increased by changing the system of cultivating the soil and diminishing the amount of human labour, has no foundation. Such was the condition of things when the Fenian conspiracy broke out; and I say that upon a right appreciation of the character of the Fenian conspiracy, depends the question whether the policy of the right honourable gentleman at the head of the Government is a wise, just, and necessary policy, or whether we may not be pursuing a policy most dangerous and fatal to this country.

We approach this subject under some advantages. I can

say for myself that I can consider it without prejudice or passion. The Fenian conspiracy did not commence when I and my colleagues were responsible for the government of the country. It had already broken out, or I dare say that there might have been some impartial critics on public affairs who would have alleged that that conspiracy broke out in consequence of our policy. We inherited the conspiracy from our predecessors, but I am the first to acknowledge that the policy of our predecessors was not accountable for that event. However, I and my colleagues had to bear the brunt of that conspiracy, and even our opponents have generously and fairly admitted that we put it down with firmness and yet with moderation. Therefore, having no passion or prejudice on the subject, I can express my opinion as to the character and cause of the Fenian conspiracy with little fear of being misunderstood. I had the opportunity of making myself well informed on the subject. Honourable gentlemen know now a great deal about it, but something never will be known except by those who at that moment incurred the responsibilities of conducting affairs, and I will express my conviction that the Fenian conspiracy was an entirely foreign conspiracy. I do not by that mean to say it was a merely American conspiracy. It did not arise from Ireland, and it was supported from Ireland very slightly. The whole plan and all the resources came from abroad, and the people of Ireland, as a people, repudiated that conspiracy. From the commencement the persons who got up the conspiracy—the originators and abettors of it—were persons influenced by obsolete traditions as to the condition of Ireland, and the temper of the Irish people, and when they applied their preparations to Ireland they found out the great mistake they had made, in assuming that they were dealing with Ireland as it was at the commencement of the century.

No doubt there are people in Ireland who will at all times sympathise with a political movement of any kind. A very lively people, with not too much to do, and little variety of pursuit, will always have among them a class of persons ready to busy themselves with any mischief that is going on. There is a certain class in Ireland who are in the habit of saying what

they do not mean, and of doing that which they never intended. But no class of any importance, no individuals of any importance, ever sanctioned the Fenian movement: they repudiated it; they felt that it was an anachronism, that it originated in obsolete traditions, and was devised by people who were perfectly unaware that the Ireland upon which they were operating was the Ireland in which there had been the portentous revolution I have referred to. If this view be correct, I say that the inference I have a right to draw is this—that the Fenian conspiracy having been completely baffled, having been met—I hope I may be allowed to say with courage and wisdom—and having been completely put down, it ought to have been allowed to pass away, and that the improvement in the condition of Ireland ought to have been permitted to proceed; so that in the course of time, in another ten, or even twenty years—and what are twenty years in the history of a very ancient nation like Ireland, and a nation which has passed through such vicissitudes?—we had a right to believe that Ireland would have been in much the same condition as England or Scotland.

But the right honourable gentleman took a different view. The Government said, in effect—‘The Fenian conspiracy is a national conspiracy. Because of the Fenian movement, we say that the whole or that a great body of the Irish people are dissatisfied and discontented with the English Government, and what therefore must we do? Why, we must rescind the whole policy of conciliation carried on for thirty or forty years.’ This is the keystone of the right honourable gentleman’s policy, that I am now touching upon. The Government, I say declared—‘We must throw aside all the material conclusions that have resulted from the portentous events that occurred in Ireland, and that did not result from human legislation. Never mind the lesson of the famine. Never mind the lesson which emigration has taught you. Never mind all the steps which, in consequence, you were then obliged to take in this country. The Fenian conspiracy proves to us that the whole nation is disaffected. We must rescind the policy of this country, and we must have instead a policy of great change and great disturbance,’—for you cannot have great change without great

disturbance I say that the whole question, whether the policy of the Government—the gigantic issue which the right honourable gentleman has raised—is a wise or a fatal policy, entirely depends upon the right appreciation of the Fenian movement.

The right honourable gentleman says—‘This is a proof of general and national discontent. There must therefore be a complete revolution,’ and we have before us the first proposition of the right honourable gentleman. Now, what is this first proposition? The Bill we are asked to read a third time is a Bill to abolish the Protestant Church in Ireland, and to confiscate its property. I will not repeat the general objections to that policy. On the third reading of the Bill, and when we wish to secure a division, we ought to avoid any repetition of arguments. I will not then do more than remind the House that it is a change in the Constitution of England, that this is, as the right honourable gentleman and his friend have announced, a revolutionary measure. I will not enlarge on what I myself deeply feel—that it weakens the character of the civil power by divorcing it from the religious principle which has hitherto strengthened and consecrated it. I will not touch upon what is quite unnecessary to mention—that this is not a measure which will increase the confidence in property in this country. I say willingly that I am myself prepared, if necessary, to consider all these contingencies—to consider whether it ought not to be our duty to adopt a policy involving a change in the Constitution, which is avowed by those who bring it forward as a revolutionary policy, which endangers and weakens property, which may damage to the last degree the very character of civil authority, by divesting it of any connection with religion—all these contingencies, I repeat, I am prepared to consider, and, if necessary, to accept, if the supreme safety of the State requires it.

But I say that we have at least a right to ask Her Majesty’s Government that we should have proofs of that necessity. What I want to ask the House on this occasion is—prepared, as I assume the majority of the House is, to embrace all these large and violent propositions—Have we received from the Government adequate evidence to prove the necessity

—have we received any evidence? I want to know that. Ireland is discontented again, Ireland is disturbed again, there is one remedy for that discontent and that disturbance; it is the abolition of the Protestant Church, and the confiscation of its revenues. Have we evidence that if we abolish that Church and confiscate its revenues, we shall render Ireland contented and tranquil? Sir, so far as I can form an opinion, that evidence does not exist. I receive myself a great many letters every day upon the state of Ireland. We have heard from an honourable gentleman (Sir George Jenkinson) during these recent debates, how much he was applied to in a similar manner. I do not know whether his correspondence exceeds mine, but mine is of two kinds; I have a correspondence from laymen, even from ladies. Though you may smile, if I read some of these letters to the House you would find that they are of a harrowing character. There are letters from Irishmen and Irishwomen, describing a state of affairs which would make every countenance serious that heard them. The writers are extremely alarmed about the lawless state of their country, and I am not in a position to relieve or remove their alarm. But I also receive a great many letters from clergymen of the Established Church in Ireland, and they are also alarming—but their alarm is of a different character. These clergymen are only alarmed at the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. They are not at all alarmed at the state of the country. Some of those clergymen live in Tipperary, and some of them in Westmeath; but not one of them tells me that he is in danger—that his life is menaced, or that he is under the least apprehension of offence or personal attack from his Irish fellow-countrymen. Though almost every week we have accounts of outrages in Ireland, I have not heard that any clergyman of the Established Church has been a victim. No Irish clergyman of my acquaintance has ever alluded to disturbance.

Then, I say, what is the evidence, that, if we abolish the Irish Church and confiscate its resources, we shall cause any diminution of the discontent and disturbance which prevail among a portion of the Irish people, inasmuch as it does not appear

that the discontent and disturbance arise from any of the accidents of the Irish Church? Surely, if it were true that the abolition of the Church and the confiscation of its property would be sufficient to remove that discontent and disturbance we should have some evidence of the fact in assaults on the persons of the clergy. (A laugh.) Will the honourable gentleman who laughs be good enough to explain why it is that the landlord should be assassinated while the clergyman is left unharmed? If the persons who commit these outrages are discontented with the landlord or with the class to which he belongs, and prove their discontent in the manner that has lately been exhibited, why should they not assault the clergyman if they are discontented with him or with the class to which he belongs? But, on the contrary, the clergyman is in a state of complete security; he makes no complaint of the circumstances of the locality in which he passes his existence, and, so far as his letters are concerned, you would not even suppose that his country was disturbed.

I again ask, then, what evidence have we that if we have recourse to this violent remedy we shall effect the cure for which it is brought forward? But in itself the objections to it are very considerable, totally irrespective of those general ones to which I have alluded. If the right honourable gentleman had proposed to confiscate the property of the Irish Protestant Church and transfer it to the Roman Catholic Church, though I should consider that an unjust and unwise measure, it would be an intelligible proposition. It would be a proposition for which arguments could be offered, and which at least would be consistent with the principle of property. But what does the right honourable gentleman say? 'I propose to confiscate the property of the Protestant Church, because the Roman Catholic Church is discontented.' What does that amount to? To a recognition of the principles of Socialism. A man comes forward and says—'I am a poor man, and I am discontented because another man has an estate and a park. I do not want his estate and his park, because I know that every man cannot expect to have an estate and a park, but take them away from that other man, and my political

views are met.' Well, that is Socialism, and it is the policy which Her Majesty's Ministers now propose to adopt.

What I wish to impress upon the House is this—we have no evidence whatever to justify or even to colour the great changes which are proposed. Let us see what will be the first effect of this revolution. It must produce this effect—it will outrage the feelings of a considerable portion, though not the majority, of the people of Ireland, because I am not at all prepared to admit that there are two nations in Ireland. I look upon the Irish nation as one people. For the last forty years they have been a homogeneous people. If we go into an analysis of the elements of a nation, in the way which has been attempted in this debate, I am not sure that we shall be able to prove that the English people are so homogeneous as political philosophy now requires a people to be. I treat the Irish as one nation, and I think all must admit that the course we are pursuing must outrage the feelings and sensibly injure the interest of a considerable portion of that nation. Well, Sir, that is a break-up of the system of general conciliation which has been pursued for so many years. You have disorder and disquiet in Ireland, and you injure those who are tranquil and not disorderly. You add their discontent to existing disaffection. Under what circumstances are you pursuing this course? You are pursuing it under these circumstances: Assuming that the Fenian conspiracy is an absolute proof of the disaffection of the majority of the Irish nation—which I believe to be the greatest fallacy in the world—you announce a great change in your policy, you rescind the ancient policy of conciliation, and announce a policy of change and revolution, of which the first measure is before us, but several other measures have been promised and announced.

I will not dwell in any detail upon them now, but it is impossible to forget, when we are considering the wisdom of your present proposition, that you have held out expectations to the great portion of the people of Ireland respecting the tenure of land. I am not going to make quotations from the speeches of honourable gentlemen opposite, which is never my way, but I must refer to them when they affect the public

conduct of their party. There is no doubt you have selected this time to announce your policy upon subjects scarcely less important, perhaps quite as important as the Irish Church. The right honourable gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the minister¹ peculiarly charged with the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in Ireland, has publicly denounced the 'infernal land laws' of that country. (Mr. Bruce denied having used the words.) The statement has been made in this House, and the right honourable gentleman did not then take the opportunity of making the explanation which he probably will at a future period. Whether the right honourable gentleman did or did not make that declaration is at present of little importance, but that the great portion of the Irish believe that he made it is of the utmost importance. Why was it passed over in silence? What was the effect of that declaration? Why, Captain Rock came out of his retirement directly; again we found Molly Maguire waving her bonnet, and Lady Clare paying evening visits to the landlords and farmers of Ireland. It is all very well for the right honourable gentleman to tell me in a half-whisper across the table that he intends to deny it, but he cannot forget that this passage in his speech was read in this House a month ago, and that he did not then make the denial. (Mr. Bruce. There was nothing in the speech about 'infernal land laws'.)

Perhaps it was landlords. I am never anxious to twit my opponents with their speeches, and I did not bring the extract with me, but I will send it to the right honourable gentleman. But I say you have at this moment unfortunately produced every possible element that can be devised to disturb Ireland. It is not merely that you propose this great measure of abolishing the Church, which at once enlists against you the feelings, as is now proved, of 1,500,000 of the population of that country—because it cannot be estimated by those who are in formal communion with that Church—but, whether you are guiltless or not, you have so contrived it that you have conveyed the impression to the great portion of the Irish people—who apparently were very content, who were gaining higher wages

¹ Mr. Bruce, afterwards Lord Aberdare.

than they did twenty-five years ago, and who were continuously employed—the impression that a great revolution is about to take place in the tenure of land. I do not dwell on the subject of education, because it has not produced any agitation at present. The Roman Catholic Church on the subject of education waits in grim repose.

This is quite clear that we have now before us—whether it was necessary or not is another question—instead of an Ireland that was at least tranquil—that in my mind was essentially progressive in its improvement, that was not in any way connected with originating the Fenian movement—you have an Ireland now which you must be prepared to witness as the scene of disturbance—perhaps of disaster. What will be the natural consequence? What is the state of affairs we must prepare ourselves for if Ireland be the scene of great disturbances? For you not only have one body of the population agitating for a revolution in the land tenure, and another—and a most influential body—holding back from a Government which they think has betrayed them with respect to the institution most dear to their feelings and most prized by them. I say, amid all this distraction and disorder there will be one power and one body that will not be disordered and distracted. There is one power in that country where you are preparing such elements of disturbance which is organised and disciplined with a powerful tradition, and which is acting under the authority and command of a supreme and sovereign central power. Now, I am not one of those who wish to create unnecessary alarm about the power of the Papacy. There are philosophers opposite who of course despise the power of the Papacy. But I am not speaking on this subject as a philosopher, nor, I hope, as a bigot; I am speaking as a member of Parliament looking to public affairs, looking to what I think will be the consequence of the conduct of the ministers of this country, and endeavouring to contemplate the means by which we may have to counteract those consequences. I do not blame the Papacy if Ireland is in the state of confusion and distraction that it soon must be if this policy is followed. I do not blame the Papacy for fulfilling that which their convictions must

make their highest duty. One's ordinary knowledge of human nature convinces us of this—that if men are abler than others, if they have the advantage of discipline and organisation, when all others are undisciplined and disordered, when everything is confusion, when everyone is discontented, when you have Captain Rock among the peasantry, and when you have the Protestants of Ireland feeling, as they will feel, betrayed and deserted, they will take advantage of such a state of things in order to advance the opinions which they conscientiously say are the right ones, and avail themselves in such circumstances of the discipline and order which they command.

You are encountering under those circumstances a foe with which you will find it very difficult to compete; and to laugh at such possible contingencies, at such highly probable contingencies, may do very well for the course of this debate; but what will be our condition when these almost certain results happen, and when you, if you sit in Parliament at that time, will be called on to devise means to counteract and to prevent a consummation of consequences which hitherto have been conceived and held in this country to be fatal to our liberties? I say, Sir, it cannot be for a moment—it ought not for a moment to be concealed from ourselves, that the policy of Rome, when we give every inducement and encouragement to that policy, will be to convert Ireland into a Popish kingdom. It will not only be her policy, it will be her duty. Then you will understand what she means with regard to the Established Churches; then you will understand what she means with regard to national education; then you will understand what that great system is which hitherto has been checked and controlled by the Sovereign of this country, but in a manner which has never violated the rights and the legal liberties of one Roman Catholic fellow-subject.

But you will now by this policy have forced and encouraged Rome to adopt a line different from that which hitherto she has pursued. What will happen? Is it probable that the Protestants of Ireland will submit to such a state of affairs without a struggle? Who can believe it? They will not. They never will submit to the establishment of Papal ascend-

ency in Ireland without a struggle. How can you suppose it? How is it to be prevented? It may occur, probably, when the union between the two countries which is to be partially dissolved to-night may be completely dissolved; for it is very possible that, after a period of great disquietude, doubt, and passion, events may occur which may complete that severance of the union which to-night we are commencing.¹ But what of that? I do not suppose that if there were a struggle between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of Ireland to-morrow, even the right honourable President of the Board of Trade,² or the most fanatic champion of non-interference, can suppose England would be indifferent. What I fear in the policy of the right honourable gentleman is that its tendency is to civil war.

I am not surprised that honourable gentlemen should for a moment be startled by such an expression. Let them think a little. Is it natural and probable that the Papal power in Ireland will attempt to attain ascendancy and predominance? I say it is natural; and, what is more, it ought to do it. Is it natural that the Protestants of Ireland should submit without a struggle to such a state of things? You know they will not; that is settled. Is England to interfere? Are we again to conquer Ireland? Are we to have a repetition of the direful history which on both sides now we wish to forget? Is there to be another battle of the Boyne, another siege of Derry, another Treaty of Limerick? These things are not only possible, but probable. You are commencing a policy which will inevitably lead to such results. It was because we thought the policy of the right honourable gentleman would lead to such results that we opposed it on principle; but when the House by a commanding majority resolved that the policy should be adopted, we did not think it consistent with our duty to retire from the great business before us, and endeavoured to devise amendments to this Bill, which I do not say would have effected our purpose, but which at least might have softened the feelings, spared the interests, and saved the honour of those who were attacked by the Bill. In considering these amend-

¹ Prophetic.

² Mr. Bright.

ments we were most scrupulous to propose nothing that could counteract and defeat the *main principles* of the policy of the right honourable gentleman. We felt that to do so would be to trifle with the House; would not be what was due to the right honourable gentleman, and could not effect the purpose we had before us. There was not an amendment which, on the part of my friends, I placed on the table, that was not scrupulously drawn up with this consideration; there was not one of those amendments which, in my opinion, the right honourable gentleman might not have accepted, and yet have carried his main policy into effect. What the effect of carrying these amendments might have been, I pretend not now to say; but at least, if they had been carried, or if the right honourable gentleman himself had modified his Bill in unison with their spirit, there was a chance of our coming to some conclusion which would have given some hope for the future.

I ask the House to recollect at this moment the tone and spirit in which these amendments were received. Rash in its conception, in its execution arrogant, the policy of the right honourable gentleman, while it has secured the triumph of a party, has outraged the feelings of a nation. If the right honourable gentleman had met us in the spirit in which we met him, at any rate we should have shown the Protestants of Ireland that, whatever might be the opinion of the majority upon the State necessity of the policy of the Government, there was a desire in Parliament to administer it in a spirit of conciliation towards those who, as all must acknowledge, are placed in a position of almost unexampled difficulty and pain. But not the slightest encouragement was given to us, no advance on our part was ever accepted by the right honourable gentleman who has insisted upon the hard principle of his measure, and it has become my duty upon this, the last day, to comment upon the character of that principle, and the possible consequences of its adoption. I know very well the difficult position in which we are placed to-night. I know very well it would be more convenient if we did not ask for the opinion of the House to-night, and allow this third reading to pass unchallenged; but I confess I could not reconcile that course with

my sense of public duty. If this Bill be what I believe it to be, it is one which we ought to protest against to the last, and we cannot protest against it in a manner more constitutional, more Parliamentary, more satisfactory to our constituencies and to the nation than by going to a vote upon it.

We know very well you will have a great party triumph, a huge majority, and we shall have what is called 'loud and continued cheering.' But remember this, that when Benjamin Franklin's mission was rejected there was loud and continued cheering, and Lords of the Privy Council waved their hats and tossed them in the air; but that was the commencement of one of the greatest struggles this country ever embarked in; it was the commencement of a series of the greatest disasters England ever experienced. And I would recommend the House to feel at this moment that this is not a question like the paper duty, not a party division upon some colonial squabble; we are going, if we agree to this Bill to-night, so far as the House of Commons is concerned, to give a vote which will be the most responsible public act that any man on either side of the House ever gave. You may have a great majority now, you may cheer, you may indulge in all the jubilation of party triumph; but this is a question as yet only begun, and the time will come, and come ere long, when those who have taken a part in the proceedings of this House this night, whatever may be their course and whatever their decision, will look upon it as one of the gravest incidents of their lives, as the most serious scene at which they have ever assisted. I hope when that time shall come, none of us on either side of the House will feel that he has by his vote contributed to the disaster of his country.

SPEECH ON ADDRESS, February 8 1870

[At the meeting of Parliament in 1870, the condition of Ireland was so bad that it hardly seemed possible that it could be worse. Disestablishment had stimulated lawlessness, and the situation was in fact almost parallel to what we witness at the present moment.]

MR DISRAELI Mr Speaker,—The Speech from the Throne promises the introduction of many important measures, but I think, Sir, this is hardly an occasion when it would be convenient to the House that we should enter into any general criticism upon them. I will, therefore, only express a hope that when those measures are brought forward we shall find they are treated by Her Majesty's Government in a manner not unworthy of their importance. Nor, indeed, should I have ventured to trouble the House at all to night, had it not been for some passages towards the end of the Speech which refer to the condition of Ireland. Those passages, I confess, appear to me to be neither adequate nor altogether accurate. Her Majesty's Government acknowledge that the condition of Ireland is not at all satisfactory, but, while admitting it is bad, they remind us that on previous occasions it has been worse. They tell us that they have employed freely the means at their command for the prevention of outrage—a statement which the House must have heard with satisfaction from so authoritative a quarter, because certainly the popular and general impression was to the contrary. As I understand the language, which to me seems involved, and certainly is ambiguous, the Government inform us that, contingent upon their passing certain measures, they will resume the duty of a Government, and protect life and property. I confess I am sorry to see in a document of this imperial character that any body of men who are responsible

ministers of the Crown are of opinion that to protect the life and property of Her Majesty's subjects is a contingent duty.

Now, with respect to the condition of Ireland, and why I think this notice of it by Her Majesty's Government is neither adequate nor accurate. Unquestionably before this we have had murders in Ireland, and assassinations and mutilations, and violence in all its multifarious forms—threatening notices, secret societies, turbulent meetings, and a seditious press. All this has happened before. But on all previous occasions when such disorders have pervaded that country reasons have been alleged, and if not universally, have been generally adopted by influential persons in the country as explanatory of their occurrence. I remember, Sir, that when I first came into Parliament—thirty years ago now, and something more I am sorry to say—the state of Ireland was most unsatisfactory; and then it was commonly alleged that it was in a great degree to be attributed to what was called the maladministration of justice, and the conduct of high persons on the judicial bench was impugned and defended in this House, and reprimands were indulged in with all the animosity of party conflict. Well, no one can pretend now that the scenes of outrage which extend over a considerable portion of Ireland can be attributed to the maladministration of justice. For the last ten years—I may say twenty and even more—the administration of justice in Ireland has been as just, as pure, and as learned as in this country; and I say this, well knowing that those who sit upon the bench in Ireland have, in the majority of cases, been appointed by the party opposite, and that most of them are members of the Roman Catholic community. Generally speaking, too, if you take also a large view of the conduct of juries in Ireland, particularly under the trying circumstances of the last few years, the law has been vindicated by them with courage and loyalty. Maladministration of justice, then, cannot be alleged to-day as the cause of the crime and outrage which prevail in Ireland at this moment. Another cause which used to be alleged was religious dissension. People said—‘What can you expect from a country where you allow the minority of the people great privileges in respect of their religion, and permit

ecclesiastical inequalities to exist? Put an end to the Protestant ascendancy which you support with so much zeal, and you will put an end to these disorders.'

Religious dissension was very generally received as the cause of the disorders and disturbances of Ireland; but that plea cannot be urged now. The Protestant population of Ireland now possess no exclusive privileges, their church has been despoiled and her prelates have been degraded. You have established certainly in theory ecclesiastical equality, though I fear in practice it will be found that those who were lately in possession of those privileges will hardly rise to the level of those who are now considered in theory their equals. But no one can any longer say that it is Protestant ascendancy which is the cause of these horrible disorders. Well, during the long discussions which have occurred in this House now for so many years a third reason has been frequently alleged as the true cause of the disturbed state of Ireland, and that was a seditious priesthood. Now, I am not going to maintain that things have not been said and things have not been done by isolated members of the Roman Catholic priesthood of late, which every man of sense and honour on both sides of the House must reprobate; but we know that the great body of the priesthood is arrayed in support of Her Majesty's Government, and therefore it cannot be alleged that a seditious priesthood is the cause of Ireland's trouble. The Roman Catholic congregations are exhorted from the altar to uphold the ministry of the right honourable gentleman, and I am told that even amid the perplexities of the oecumenical councils, right reverend prelates have found time and opportunity to despatch canvassing letters to the hustings of Longford and Tipperary.

Then we have sometimes been told that all those outrageous occurrences which periodically happen in Ireland are solely occasioned by an organised system of agitation conducted by individuals who made agitation profitable. 'Get rid of agitators,' we were told, 'and you will soon find Ireland tranquil and content.' That appears to have been the opinion of a right honourable gentleman who is a member of the administration; for I observed that in addressing his constituents lately he

informed them that the condition of Ireland at this moment, in respect of all its crimes and outrages, was the consequence of the desperate condition of the Irish agitators. He told them that these mischievous men are up in arms because they know a ministry is now in office which is resolved to carry measures to put an end to their profession; and he admitted, with his characteristic candour, that if there had not been a change of Government it is not all impossible that the agitators, interested in always maintaining a grievance, would have permitted Ireland, under the late administration, to be tranquil and content. Now, I must say, it strikes me as the most remarkable circumstance in the present condition of Ireland, that she is agitated without agitators. Of course at such a critical period like the present a good many of the old hands have appeared, and there is no doubt they thought the time was come when, to use a classical Liberal expression, they could carry on a 'roaring trade' in the way of agitation. But the most curious thing I have observed in the course of events in Ireland during the last twelve months is that the agitators, mean in station, not very distinguished in ability, have invariably contrived to be on the unpopular side. Although the state of Ireland has been such that, now for a considerable period, once in every week some deplorable outrage has been perpetrated, I must do the agitators the justice to say that, in my opinion, none of these acts can be fairly ascribed to them.

Again, all must agree that there have been moments in the history of Ireland when disorders and disturbances there could be traced and attributed to the influence of a foreign country. Notably at the beginning of this century—or, probably to speak with greater accuracy, I ought to say at the end of the last century—there were Irish traitors residing in France, in direct alliance with the French Republic, who threatened and did certainly accomplish the invasion of Ireland; and this foreign influence was undoubtedly the main cause of the disturbances in Ireland. And recently, within our own immediate experience, some of our Irish fellow-countrymen, who are alienated in feeling and sentiment, have, in another republic—the republic of America—by peculiar means exercised a foreign

and disturbing influence upon Ireland. We should be, I think, glad to admit, and proud to remember, that the same thing can never be said of the American republic which was justly said of the French Government—that they ever for a moment tolerated, sanctioned, or encouraged the Fenian conspiracy. I speak of course only so far as my own experience extends; but to that extent, I say that the conduct of the American Government was marked by a spirit of honour and political integrity. But, no doubt, the Irish in America have had the means of founding associations and of acting on the opinions of the population of Ireland. Accordingly, there is no doubt that in these two instances foreign influence produced these disorders. Now with regard to the Fenian conspiracy which some little time ago was alleged as the cause of these disturbances, I must express my own opinion—I have expressed that opinion before, and its accuracy has been challenged; but at least, it is an opinion formed after considerable thought, with some responsibility, and with some means of arriving at an adequate conclusion. And the opinion which I so expressed was that the Fenian conspiracy was of foreign growth. Under the Government of the Duke of Abercorn, that conspiracy was in my opinion completely broken and baffled.

That happened in America which happened in Europe after the Thirty Years' War. In America, as in Germany, the majority of the people, on both sides of the important questions then at issue, were actuated by high principles. But there were naturally a great number of military adventurers who mingled in the fray, and who, when peace was unexpectedly brought about, wished to employ their military knowledge and experience to some purpose. And the Irish, who are a military nation, had in the American army a great many of their race. But it is an error to suppose that the scheme of invading Ireland and establishing a republic in that country was confined to Irishmen. If the projected Fenian army had taken the field, the commander, and, I believe the second in command, would neither of them been Irishmen, nor, so far as I am informed, Roman Catholics. The result of that conspiracy was that, baffled in every way, with all their schemes

thwarted, they found, when they came really to the pinch of the question, that both parties to the plot had been deceived. The military adventurers could not count, as they had been led to believe they could do, upon an armed nation rising to receive them; and that part of the Irish nation which sympathised with the conspiracy was disappointed at the inadequate means with which these great intentions were proposed to be accomplished. Hence between the two parties there arose feelings of suspicion and disgust. And, notwithstanding all that we have heard, I do not believe that there is any reason for now tracing the disordered state of Ireland to Fenian machinations. I have ventured to mention five causes which, during many years, have been brought forward as accounting for the disorders and disturbances which periodically occur in Ireland; and I say that they are all obsolete or non-existing as regards the present state of affairs.

There is, I admit, a sixth and a final cause which must be noticed, which has been alleged on previous occasions—and that is the tenure of land. The tenure of land is also now mentioned as the cause of the discontent and dissatisfaction of Ireland; but the tenure of land in Ireland is the same as it was at the Union, except that it has been modified in some degree, and always to the advantage of the occupier. At any rate the tenure of land is the same now as it was when Lord Carlisle governed Ireland, and it must be the same as when the Duke of Abercorn governed Ireland. But the tenure then did not produce these scenes of disorder and outrage which have excited the fears and attention of the whole nation for a year, and which are now mentioned in Her Majesty's Speech. It seems that has happened in political affairs which is said to be impossible in physical affairs—namely, spontaneous combustion. The Irish people—that is to say, a great portion of the Roman Catholic population in Ireland—have rushed into a riotous hallucination. They have suddenly assumed that a great change was about to occur in their condition—a change which, if it should be accomplished, would weaken and perhaps destroy the amount of civilisation which

they already possess, and which, if carried to its last consequences, would resolve society into its original elements

I want to know what is the reason that this great portion of the Irish people has suddenly indulged in the wild dreams that have led to this wild and evil action? It cannot be the policy of the ministry. However we may differ as to the measures of Her Majesty's Government with respect to Ireland, there is no doubt that their policy as regards the Roman Catholic portion of the population is a conciliatory policy. Her Majesty's Government announced their intention to redress all the injuries of the Roman Catholic population, to remove all the abuses of which they have long complained, and under which they have suffered, and generally to ameliorate their condition. The announcement of such a policy could not have brought about the wild and destructive conduct of which we are now all complaining. The truth seems this—the Irish people have misinterpreted the policy of the Government. They have put a false interpretation on the policy of the Government, they have considered that the Government meant to do something different from that which I assume, and shall always believe, it is the intention of the Government to do. But I want to know this. Were the Irish people justified in the erroneous interpretation which they put on the avowed policy of the Government, and if they fell into the dangerous error of misinterpreting that policy, did the Government take all the steps, or any of the steps, that were necessary to remove that false impression and to guide the mind of the Irish people to a right conception of the state of affairs, and a due appreciation of the intentions of the Government?

It is unnecessary for me to dilate on the Irish policy of Her Majesty's Government, whatever may be its merits in the opinion of some, or its errors in the opinion of others, there is one point on which I think we must all agree, that it has been expressed on the part of Her Majesty's Government with the utmost frankness and explicitness. The right honourable gentleman opposite, when he was in a scarcely less responsible position than the one he now occupies, at a time when he was

a candidate for the highest post in the country, challenging the confidence of his Sovereign and of his country upon his Irish policy, and speaking, no doubt, with a sense of responsibility not less than that with which he would speak now, told us what his view of the Irish question, as it was called, really was. He stated that the state of Ireland was to be attributed to Protestant ascendancy, and that his policy was to put an end to Protestant ascendancy. Nothing could be clearer, more frank, or more explicit. Protestant ascendancy, the right honourable gentleman said, was at the bottom of all the disorders and all the grievances and misery of Ireland; it was a tree which had produced three branches which I shall call—not in the language of the right honourable gentleman, but in accordance with his meaning—branches of predominant perniciousness, extending into the Church, the land, and the education of the country. That was the declaration made to England and to Ireland. England cannot complain of the conduct of the right honourable gentleman, because that policy was announced before. The general election, and the vote of the English constituencies, ratified the determination of the right honourable gentleman to insure the destruction of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland.

But now, what have been the two great causes of excitement and disorder in Ireland? There have, no doubt, been several, but there were two which were prominent last year. One was a desire to free the political prisoners, and the other a demand to transfer the property of one class to another class. Those were really the two great causes. Now, unfortunately, from some observations made first in the course of debates in this House, but afterwards dwelt upon and amplified elsewhere, the public mind, not only of Ireland, but also of England, had been led to believe that Her Majesty's Government in some way connected the destruction of the Protestant Church with the Fenian conspiracy. It was generally understood to be the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that the Fenian conspiracy, if it had not entirely occasioned, at all events precipitated the fall and decided the fate of the Protestant Church in Ireland. When the Government of the right honourable

gentleman was formed there was a desire exhibited by that portion of the Irish people who were then apparently his supporters—that is, not by those who professed the Protestant religion, and who viewed the conduct of the right honourable gentleman with alarm, but by the mass of the Roman Catholic population of that country—to receive the Government of the right honourable gentleman with favour, and they agitated the country in no unfriendly spirit upon the two subjects I have named. It is of importance, in clearly understanding the condition of Ireland at this moment, that the House should discriminate between the way in which the freedom of the prisoners, for instance, was advocated in the beginning of the year by some persons in Ireland, and the mode in which it was agitated towards the close of the year.

The House will remember that when we assembled last year a remarkable and dramatic scene took place. The Lord Mayor and Corporation of Dublin presented themselves at the bar with a petition to Parliament. In their petition they requested us to support the church policy of the right honourable gentleman—a policy which might be regarded as a foregone conclusion, and about the success of which, though there might be some question about the details, there could be no doubt. But in that petition, couched in a friendly spirit, with the view of making Her Majesty's Government popular in Ireland, they also urged that an amnesty should be granted to the Fenian prisoners. I have received some Irish deputations in my time, and I thought I saw at the bar some faces that I recollected. To be historically correct, I ought to add that the completeness of their Irish policy was that the Government should purchase all the Irish railroads and immediately reduce the tariff for passengers and goods. That was their policy then. The Lord Mayor and the Corporation of Dublin were the supporters of Her Majesty's Government. They came in a friendly spirit, and in asking for an amnesty for the Fenian prisoners they believed that they were supporting the Government. But what happened? No doubt there is no more difficult question for a minister of a constitutional State to decide than that of granting an amnesty to political offenders. It is much more

difficult for a minister of a constitutional State than it is for the minister of a State where what is known as 'personal rule' prevails. In such countries there are revolutions, strokes of State, and other manœuvres which continually render it necessary that, without much inquiry or discrimination, large bodies of subjects should be imprisoned; and as it is of course very inconvenient to keep thousands of subjects in prison—and very expensive—when order is restored and tranquillity can be depended upon, the throwing open of the prison doors and releasing the prisoners is a convenient way of celebrating the birthday of the Sovereign or the marriage of his son or daughter.

But in a constitutional country it is entirely different. A political prisoner, generally speaking, cannot be imprisoned without his guilt having been proved to the satisfaction of a jury of his countrymen; and even under the rare circumstances in which a man in a free country may be arrested and imprisoned without being condemned by a verdict of a jury, still, if there be a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, it is suspended with the free will of Parliament, and its suspension is under the vigilance and control not only of Parliament but of a free press. It may, therefore, be fairly assumed that political offenders in this country are in a very different position, in regard both to the merits of their conduct and to the comparative sufferings they endure, from the political prisoners who by squads and battalions are immured in dungeons in countries where no constitutional rights are in existence. Therefore, it is the most difficult of all duties to decide upon the question of an amnesty in a constitutional country. As a general principle, though I do not say it is one from which you should never deviate, an amnesty, if there is to be one, should be complete. Now, what was the conduct of Her Majesty's Government? Her Majesty's Government responded to the friendly invitation of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and people of that kind—I mean those friends who were, to use a barbarous expression, 'ventilating' the question, in order to get support and popularity for the Government—by deciding upon a partial amnesty. Now, let us see what were the inevitable consequences of a partial

amnesty You had a paper placed upon the table last year, which gives some account of the prisoners who were freed under the partial amnesty Now, who were the first three men thus freed? Men who had been found guilty of high treason, and whose sentence of death had been commuted into one of imprisonment With that commutation I am not here to find fault Possibly I may myself share its responsibility, but this I will say—that when the Government of which I was a member, had to deal with questions of this kind, and we had to assert the majesty of the law and to establish order and tranquillity, no one can accuse us of vindictive conduct in the punishments we retained Now, the effect of releasing these three men, who had incurred the severest penalty of the law, and whose sentence of death had already been commuted to imprisonment, was that others who had a brother, a son, or a sweetheart, perhaps, in prison, naturally complained that those whose conduct had incurred the penalty of death should be released, while those whose crimes were not so great should still be detained in prison On the part of the Government it was urged that they must exercise some discretion, and that, in considering the case of these prisoners, they determined to free those in whose harmlessness they were pretty confident and secure, and that none were let out but those who could do the State no injury

Well, now, was that the fact? Look at the next three men who were let out They were three men who had incurred long terms of imprisonment, from twelve to fifteen years, men of decided opinions and violent conduct, not one of whom had ever given the slightest sign of penitence One was an able writer He emerged from his cell and immediately wrote a leading article against the Government, calling upon his fellow countrymen to commence their efforts to free themselves from the slavery under which they had so long laboured Another of them—and that is a mysterious case, which may by and by be brought under the consideration of Parliament—went to a banquet and made use of his liberty to excite Irishmen—they say he was not an Irishman himself—to violence, and he told them that the sabre was the only solution of their suffering

Well, then, I say the great body of Roman Catholics of Ireland who had relatives in prison naturally felt indignant. They regarded this partial amnesty as a most ill-considered act. These people who before were unhappy in the fate of their relatives—who no doubt felt that they were unfortunate, and that they did not deserve their doom—began now to smart under a great sense of injustice. They said—‘You have let out men, some sentenced to death, others to long periods of imprisonment, who immediately use the liberty you have given them to excite hostility against the Crown and to create sedition in the country. But our relatives are still immured, who have not been convicted of offences so heinous, or incurred sentences so heavy.’ Well, what happened? The feeling for the Fenian prisoners, which was at first got up rather to assist the Government than not, became a great national sentiment, and culminated at last in an incident which has been referred to with solemnity this evening, an incident most humiliating to the Government, and stimulating to violence and disturbance, and other classes of crime. The country was raised to a high degree of excitement when it was most important that it should be appeased and kept quiet. I said just now that you must remember this—that the great body of the Roman Catholic population, without being Fenian themselves, may justly sympathise with the Fenians.

Let me explain this, for it is important the House should bear it in mind. The people of Ireland had been told, now for a great many years, that the Protestant Church in Ireland was a body of conquest. They had been assured that it was an enduring testimony of their ignominious position as a nation, and that though these might not seem its immediate effects, it was indirectly the cause of all the humiliation and discontent of the country. Now, when the great body of the Roman Catholic population found that the badge of conquest was destroyed, and, at the same time, that it was in consequence of Fenianism that they were rid of that which they had been educated to believe a badge of conquest and a source of infamy, was it not very natural, without being Fenians themselves, that they should evince some sympathy for the Fenian

prisoners? For they naturally reasoned 'It is not necessary for us to vindicate their conduct in making war on Her Majesty, of whom we are willing to be the dutiful subjects, but we have the highest authority in the land to lead us to believe that if they had not committed these crimes we should not have been released from this enduring badge of our servitude and humiliation. And, surely, if ever there was an occasion when bygones should be bygones, it is this, when there has been a change of Ministry to carry into effect the avowed consequences of Fenianism.' The people naturally thought that with the destruction of the Protestant Church the offences of these men ought to be condoned. That is the reason why you have such a strong feeling among the Irish people on behalf of the Fenians, and that is the real cause why you have had all this terrible excitement in Ireland, and why you have been called upon to do an act which would be a blow to all government—namely, without security and on no intelligible plea suddenly to open the gates of all the prisons of the country and free men who were condemned by the solemn verdict of juries, and after trials, the justice and impartiality of which have certainly never been impugned, even by the Fenians themselves.

So much for one of the two great causes which have brought about this condition of Ireland. So far as I can form an opinion upon the facts as they appear to us, it seems to me that one of the great causes of the excitement in Ireland, of the spirit of turbulence, discontent, and disloyalty which have been rampant during the last twelve months, is to be attributed to the Government with regard to the Fenian prisoners.

And now let me ask the House to consider the other cause. The agitation in Ireland has been for two things—to free the political prisoners, upon which I have already touched, and in the second place—it is better to state it in plain language—virtually to transfer the property of one class to another. Now let us see what has happened with respect to that. Let us inquire what excuse, what reason, there is for the erroneous interpretation which the people of Ireland have put on the intentionally beneficent policy of the right honourable gentle-

man. Now, I apprehend that they reason in this manner:—The policy of the Government is to put an end to Protestant ascendancy. That there is no mistake about; we have it on the highest authority. Then they would go on to say:—‘It is the cause of all our miseries, but its three most enormous products are the Protestant Church, the tenure of land, and the present system of education.’ We all know how the right honourable gentleman has dealt with the Protestant Church. It was not necessary for the people of Ireland to wait until the termination of the last session of Parliament to know the policy of the right honourable gentleman on this subject, because, at the beginning of the session, the right honourable gentleman was pledged to the destruction of the Protestant Church. Therefore, so far as the formation of public opinion among the Irish people was concerned, from the beginning of last session they took it as a foregone conclusion, as an accomplished fact, that the Irish Church was abolished. Well, they reasoned in this way:—‘The Irish Church is abolished. The bishops and rectors are deprived of their property. The next grievance, according to the same high authority, is the land. Is it not a natural consequence that if you settle the question of the Irish Church by depriving the bishops and rectors of their property, you will settle the question of the land by depriving the landlords of their property? I do not say that this is the policy of the Government; I do not say that we thought that was the policy of the Government; but I say that it is not an unnatural inference of the Irish people. I say in the next place that it was the actual inference of the Irish people.

There could be no mistake about it in Ireland, because a right honourable gentleman,¹ too short a time a member of this House, now the Master of the Rolls in Ireland, on his appointment by the new Government to an office which, as far as the interest of the country was concerned at the particular time, was second to none—the office of Attorney-General for Ireland—addressed his constituents,¹ and he used these significant terms—that the Prime Minister would introduce three Bills, one about

¹ The Right Honourable E. Sullivan.

the Church, one about the land, and the third about education; and on this declaration of policy he was elected. Therefore, there is no doubt that the Irish people drew the inference that the same policy was to apply to the land as to the Church. Now I will give a proof of that. In 1868 the Irish land question occupied the attention of the Government, as it had occupied for some time the attention of successive Governments. There was a desire, I must say, on the part of those in Ireland who had been called agitators, and who had been very much abused, to bring it to some settlement, and they made communications to the Government. Now I think their plan was—first, utterly irreconcilable with principle, secondly, that it would have ultimately aggravated the evils it was intended to cure. But throwing these great objections aside for a moment, it was not an outrageous proposition. Those who had taken the most active part with regard to the question of the tenure of land in Ireland, those societies and bodies of farmers attended a meeting which had been convened, and agreed to accept what was recommended by Mr. Butt—namely, a lease for sixty three years, with rents fixed at the Poor Law valuation and twenty per cent added, a reassessment to be made at the end of the term, and the improvements to be then given to the landlord. I will not enter into the argument now, but I could never have sanctioned that proposition. But, though it may have been an unwise one, everybody will admit that it was not a revolutionary proposition. Well that was in 1868. But the moment the agitation arose about the Irish Church, or rather at the period when it was quite clear from the vote of this House that the Irish Church was doomed, these societies and bodies of farmers all receded from that engagement. They all said instantly—‘The question has now assumed a totally different aspect, we will no longer be bound by the offer that we made’—and which I believe they made in all sincerity—and the question entered into a new phase, until it culminated in the resolution arrived at by the meeting of Munster farmers when they declared that nothing short of perpetuity of tenure would be satisfactory. Well, is it not clearly demonstrated that they did expect that an analogous policy would be applied to the land to that which

was applied to the Church? And I say, was there not ground for the false interpretation that was put on the policy of the Government? And what steps did the Government then take to remove that false impression? Why, Sir, we had a discussion on this head last year. I will read a passage, a very short one, from the speech of a noble Lord, who, for every reason, I regret is no longer a member of this House. Lord Stanley, on the 30th of April, 1869, addressing the right honourable gentleman the First Minister, said this:

‘What we want—and it is for that purpose alone I now rise—is to obtain from the Government a declaration—it need not be in many words, but I hope they will be plain and distinct—that, while on the one hand, the claim of the tenants to compensation shall be admitted and respected, the proprietary rights of the landlords, on the other hand, will be firmly maintained. Let them only be firm upon that point—let them only act upon what I have no doubt is their own view of the subject—let them only maintain the law calmly and resolutely, and depend upon it you will get over this agitation, as you have got over hundreds of similar agitations. But, if everything is to remain in a state of obscurity until next year, if the Irish people are left in the dark, if they are left, unchecked and uncontradicted, to entertain any wild fancies upon this matter that may float through their minds, then I fear that the present excitement and disturbance will continue, and will even increase; and in that case, but in that case only. I will say, that for what may occur in the next few months the Executive authority must be held responsible’ (3 ‘Hansard,’ cxcv. 2001–2).

Lord Stanley sat by me when he made those observations, and they had my entire assent. They were clear, they were firm, they were temperate, they were wise. They were made in April, when there was excitement, disorder in Ireland—when there had even been some dreadful deeds committed. But, looking at what happened at the end of the summer and throughout the autumn, that period of April was a period of comparative tranquillity. Now, I ask the House to consider this question calmly and impartially—Did the Government, when those wild misconceptions and excitement prevailed in

the minds of the great body of Irish people, take any step to enlighten them, to guide them in a right direction, and to avert the fearful acts which have been their consequence? Sir, what happened in Ireland? Generally speaking, these farmers of ten acres, those millions of peasants, are naturally influenced by the example of leading men on these subjects. What means have these poor people, who scarcely ever see a newspaper and have nothing at all to guide them, what means have they of forming an opinion as to the probable course and intentions of Parliament or of ministers, but by the words and the conduct of those who are leaders in the society to which they belong? Now, I do not say that Her Majesty's Government are responsible for the words or the conduct of the honourable member for Kilkenny (Sir John Gray). I have no doubt that honourable gentleman is a perfectly independent member of Parliament; and it is not for me for a moment to insinuate that Her Majesty's Government are responsible for anything that he says or does. But the people of Ireland know that the honourable member for Kilkenny has great confidence in Her Majesty's Government; he has taken every opportunity of expressing it. They know well that he took a decided line on the Irish Church question; they know, or at least they believe, that if not in confidential, he was in friendly communication with the Prime Minister on that subject; and they know that whenever he spoke on it there was sympathy from official quarters with his remarks and his general views. They know very well, moreover, that upon his general views Her Majesty's Government ultimately acted. I take the honourable member for Kilkenny to be a fair specimen of an influential and bustling class of members of Parliament, who are naturally looked up to by their fellow-countrymen, who think them knowing men and acquainted with what is going to happen. Well, he attends meetings, makes speeches, moves resolutions on the land question, and speaks with all the authority of a man who was right on the Irish Church question; and he says to his hearers: 'We must be firm; we are sure to get what we want if we are firm; but nothing must satisfy you except fixity of tenure.' Is it, then, at all surprising that the Irish people should suppose that

by the same course as they got rid of the Protestant Church, of the Protestant bishops and rectors, they will also get rid of their landlords and obtain fixity of tenure? But there were persons of more exalted position, who took a leading part in the affairs of Ireland during the last year. I am not going to make the Chief Minister responsible for the conduct of a lord lieutenant of a county, who may have his own views, and may act upon them. He may be independent and may be imprudent, but a Prime Minister is always in confidential communication with Her Majesty's representatives in every place; and if Her Majesty's representative happens to be not only a Lord Lieutenant of a county, but also a strong partizan and supporter of the Government, it is quite clear that a man of the authority of the present Prime Minister need only give a hint, or order others to give a hint to a Lord Lieutenant, to prevent any imprudent or violent act on his part. But what do the Irish people see? They see a Lord Lieutenant, a knight of St. Patrick, calling meetings, attending meetings, making violent speeches—I should say incendiary speeches—and counselling his audience to call upon the Government to grant to Ireland fixity of tenure, that is, the transfer of the property of class to another. Well, is it surprising that all these circumstances should have created in Ireland another and a second source of great excitement on a subject so much calculated to quicken the feelings of that people? In connection with these incendiary speeches, let me, in passing, remind the House of what happened many years ago with reference to one of the most respectable members of Parliament, who was held in the highest personal esteem by both sides of the House. When Sir William Verner, at an obscure local dinner gave as a toast 'The Battle of the Diamond'—one of those unhappy conflicts, as honourable gentlemen are aware, between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the worst days of Irish history—the matter was immediately brought before Parliament, and I am not sure that the Sovereign was not advised to deprive him of some honours he possessed. I am speaking from memory; but was that offence of Sir William Verner—and I would not extenuate it—more outrageous or more incendiary than the allusion of

the Queen's representative to 'the glories of Vinegar Hill?' I let us see what occurred in Ireland after this to induce the Irish people to entertain a soberer view of affairs. There were the elections. If anything can elicit opinion it is an election.

Her Majesty was advised to elevate a non member of this House (Colonel Greville Nugent) to the peerage. If blood and large estate qualify for that great post, I think Her Majesty was wisely advised, nor, Sir, as far as I am concerned, do I object at all to see the son of that noble lord (Captain Greville Nugent) his successor in this House. But he could not come into Parliament without expressing the opinions which he came to support, namely, that he was in favour of a complete amnesty for the Fenian prisoners, and for fixity of tenure in respect to Irish land. Of course Her Majesty's Government are not responsible for the opinions of independent members of Parliament, but as the honourable member for Longford is not a very old man, the poor people of Ireland may be pardoned for thinking that he would not be offended if some good advice had been given him by men in authority. It would not be unnatural if they said, 'Depend upon it he would not pledge himself to the emancipation of the Fenians and to fixity of tenure (which is the transferring of one man's property to another) unless he knew what he was about. They made his father a peer, and he is here to say the right thing.'

That was the Longford election, and I think the circumstances to which I have referred were calculated to mislead the minds of the people. All this time, while the minds of the people were so much misled, and such a degree of excitement was added to that which had existed on the subject of the Fenian prisoners, deeds of outrage, crime, and of infinite turbulence were perpetrated simultaneously, and I believe as a necessary consequence of that misleading of the public mind. But there was another election,¹ a very interesting election, which has been already alluded to, to-night. What happened at that election? There was a gentleman² who occupied a post of trust and confidence in the late Whig Administration, of which the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr Gladstone) was the organ in this House. If there be any post

¹ Tipperary.

² Mr Heron QO

which more than another requires discretion and prudence, and which more than another requires a man who weighs his words, it is that of Law Adviser to the Castle. Well, the gentleman who had filled that honourable post was, I will not say the Government candidate, because honourable gentlemen opposite might blame me for using so unconstitutional a phrase; but the only candidate who came forward to vindicate the policy of the Government, and to support them. I know nothing of the green scarf which he is said to have worn, but I think it highly probable that he did attire himself in that way; for his mind seems thoroughly permeated with that hue as appears from all his observations. He came forward as the advocate of the immediate release of the Fenian prisoners, and gave three cheers for the people in prison, a most remarkable exhibition of discretion on the part of the late Law Adviser of the Castle. He declared himself a firm supporter of fixity of tenure in land. Now, Sir, notwithstanding the reckless manner in which the late Law Adviser of the Castle—who, it was generally supposed, was going to be something greater than Law Adviser to the Castle if he succeeded in securing his election—notwithstanding the reckless manner in which he pledged himself to his intended constituents—he was defeated. He was defeated¹ under circumstances which we shall have to consider in the next eight and forty hours. The people of Ireland had to choose between a sham Fenian and a real Fenian, and it is astonishing what a preference is always given to the genuine article.

But now I must call the attention of the House to what occurred when the Government candidate was defeated, though he had pledged himself to all those revolutionary doctrines. All this time, especially from the period when Lord Stanley delivered those observations which I have quoted, horrible scenes of violence had been occurring in Ireland, but the Government would never move. Landlords were shot down like game, respectable farmers were beaten to death with sticks by masked men; bailiffs were shot in the back; policemen were stabbed; the High Sheriff of a county going to swear in the grand jury was fired at in his carriage and dan-

gerously wounded, households were blown up, and firearms surreptitiously obtained. All this time the Government would not move, but the moment the Government candidate was defeated on the hustings—a Government candidate pledged to confiscation—pledged to a course of action which would destroy all civil government—the moment that occurred there was panic in the Castle, there was confusion in the Council, the wires of Aldershot were agitated, troops were put in motion, sent across from Liverpool to Dublin, and concentrated in Waterford, Tipperary, and Cork. And all this because the candidate who was prepared to support the Government had lost his election.

I remember one of Her Majesty's ministers saying, I think last year—'Anyone can govern Ireland with troops and artillery.' So it seems, even that right honourable gentleman. But I will not further notice on this occasion anything that may have been said or done by that minister, because I hear with deep regret that he is obliged to be absent.

Now, I ask the House to consider whether this state of things has not resulted from an erroneous interpretation which the people of Ireland have put on the avowed policy of Government, and from the circumstance that the Government have refrained from attempting in any way to remove the misconception, and what is the position in which we are now probably to be placed. Her Majesty's Government have given notice of their intention to bring forward in a few days a measure respecting the tenure of land in Ireland. I have every hope—I will say every expectation—that it will be a just and prudent measure. If so, it will obtain impartial consideration on both sides of the House, and, so far as I am concerned, it will obtain cordial support. I apprehend it will be a measure that will deal with all necessary points, and with none other, that it will contain nothing that is visionary and fantastic. But if it be a measure of this kind, what will the late Law Adviser of the Castle say? What will the Earl of Granard, Her Majesty's representative, Lord Lieutenant of a county, and Knight of St Patrick say? Above all, what will the honourable member for Kilkenny say? And when men in their position—men of

intelligence and education—are disappointed, what will be the feeling among the great body of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland? What will be the feeling of the farmers and peasants who denounce the proposed settlement of 1868, and who said at their last great meeting that nothing but perpetuity of tenure would do, because that was a word about which there could be no mistake? Sir, I think this is a matter of very serious consideration for the House. I object to the position taken by the right honourable gentleman. He will excuse me if I say that on this point the language in the Speech from the Throne is ambiguous and confused. Are we to understand that no measures for the protection of life and property are to be taken until these Bills have been passed, and the effects of them have been felt in Ireland? If that is the case we may be prepared for a scene of disorder and disturbance in that country such as has never before been experienced, and such as we shall find great difficulty in successfully encountering. The mention of Ireland in the Queen's Speech is to me inadequate and inaccurate.

I may be asked by the right honourable gentleman, 'that be your opinion why do you not move an amendment on the Address, and give us what you conceive to be an adequate and accurate description?' I believe that would be not only unwise, but under the present circumstances of the case, a most improper step on my part. If we are to have a Bill on the tenure of land brought in, we ought, if possible, to consider it free from party feelings, and with the anxious desire, not to satisfy the wild vagaries of the Irish people, but to lay the foundation of the future welfare and prosperity of Ireland. Then, if so, I can imagine nothing more unwise, or I would say unprincipled, than to precipitate a party division on such a subject only a few days before the introduction of the measure. But I do wish to impress upon the House the great responsibility which they incur on this subject. This is still a new House of Commons. Men have entered it who are proud, and justly proud, to be members of such an assembly; but they may depend on it that if they do not resolve to consider the question of Irish government, not only in a large but in a firm

spirit ; if they think it possible that the spirit and sense of the people of England will long endure the chronic state of disturbance that now prevails in Ireland, they are much mistaken. And they may be equally certain that when this Parliament comes to a conclusion, which they have entered with so much pride and so much justifiable self-complacency, if they err in the course they take on this question, if they sanction a policy which, if unchecked, must lead to the dismemberment of the empire, and even to the partial dissolution of society, they will look back on the day they entered Parliament with very different feelings from those which now influence them, and they will remember this House of Commons with dismay and remorse.

IRISH LAND BILL. March 11, 1870.¹

(SECOND READING.)

[In the statement that by giving the tenant a property in his occupation 'you terminate at one fell swoop all the moral relations between the owner and occupier,' is to be found the gist of Mr. Disraeli's objections to this memorable measure. It is interesting to compare with this Mr. Gladstone's speech² on introducing the Bill, from which we must infer that he expected it to develop in Ireland these very same moral relations of which Mr. Disraeli speaks, and which with some exceptions had hitherto been confined to England.]

MR. DISRAELI: Sir, we are called upon to read a second time a Bill to amend the law respecting the owners and occupiers of land in Ireland. It is not an agricultural Bill; it is a political Bill. I do not use that epithet in the sense which my right honourable friend the member for the University of Dublin (Dr. Ball) used it some few nights ago in his admirable speech. I do not mean to say that it is a revolutionary Bill; but it is a Bill the object of which is, not to improve the cultivation of land, but to improve the relations between important classes of Her Majesty's subjects. Now, Sir, a minister who could come forward and propose to deal—to meddle, I would rather say—with the relations between landlord and tenant, would undertake a task from which I think the most experienced and most resolute man would shrink, unless there was an urgent necessity of State for doing it. I myself acknowledge that the circumstances of Ireland are such

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

² *Hansard*, vol. cxcix. pp. 340, 351, 352.

as not only to justify the minister, but to call upon him to ask the attention of Parliament to this question, and invite it to come to some decision upon it.

Sir, I will not enter, or attempt to enter, into the long catalogue of the various and complicated causes which have brought Ireland, so far as the relations between the proprietor and the occupier of the soil are concerned, into such a position that it becomes the duty of the minister and of Parliament to legislate, or propose to legislate, upon the subject. But although I shrink from, and, from fear of wearying the House, avoid that topic, I may be permitted, I hope—speaking, as I trust I shall to-night, with the utmost impartiality, and not appearing here, as some honourable gentlemen do, as the advocate either of the tenant or of the landlord in particular—I hope I may be allowed to congratulate the landlords of Ireland upon this—that the result of all these investigations, of this protracted discussion, and of the scrutinising mind of the ministry of this country being brought to bear on this subject, has been that it has greatly cleared their reputation and strengthened their position. They cannot be accused of rapacity who, it is proved, receive a lower rent than the landlords of England; they cannot be accused of ruthlessness when the solitary instances with pain and difficulty brought forward against them are instances of a very few men of crazy imagination and conduct; and if we were to make a selection in England in the same spirit we might, perhaps, find a few individual proprietors influenced by similar feelings. In the result there would be the same amount of justice, and the same honour to the discoverers of the exceptional instances.

I may be allowed, if, indeed, it be necessary, to remind the House that this is no new question. It has now been in some degree under the consideration of Parliament and of the country for many years. I do not mean to say that the period which has elapsed since it was first mooted as a Parliamentary question has been one, considering its importance and magnitude, that may be deemed unreasonable. It is a habit of this country—a wise and salutary habit,

which guards us from precipitate legislation—that a question should be fairly discussed and understood, not merely by cabinets and councils, but by the nation altogether, before we give it the final seal of permanent legislation. Sir, we have had many references, in the course of the interesting debate which the motion of the right honourable gentleman has produced, to important documents, such as the Bills brought forward by ministers who have at various times endeavoured to bring this great controversy to a favourable and satisfactory termination. But I am surprised that during this protracted debate such very slight and casual reference has been made to a document which, after all, is more important than any Bill that has ever been proposed by any minister, and that is the Report of the Devon Commission.¹

From the moment that the Report of the Devon Commission—which was proposed to Parliament by one of the most eminent statesmen of this country—was laid on our table, some legislation upon the relations that existed between landlord and tenant in Ireland seemed to be inevitable. From that moment it became a public question, and one of the highest interest. I grant, Sir, that there were some persons who were then of opinion that, by the consequences of that dire calamity, perhaps the greatest and most awful visitation of the century, which occurred in Ireland—the famine—that by the great reduction of the population of that country, some of the difficulties, and those the most important, with reference to the condition of Ireland might have been removed as regards the tenure of land. But, although the population of Ireland was so largely reduced, and although in consequence of such reduction the competition for land has equally diminished, and for a time, and a very brief time, some solution of the difficulty was recognised in those circumstances, still the famine in Ireland brought about another great event in the social condition of that country²—namely, the creation of a new class of

¹ A Royal Commission, of which the Earl of Devon was chairman, appointed in 1843 to inquire into the law and practice with regard to the occupation of land in Ireland. The Report was presented to Parliament in February 1845.

² Reference to Encumbered Estates Act, 1849.

proprietors of land, which prevented that alleviation of the difficulties which was anticipated, and which in a certain degree ultimately aggravated them.

We must remember that by the encouragement of England, at the invitation of its ministers, and by the legislation of Parliament, Englishmen and Scotchmen were invited to invest their capital in the purchase of the land of Ireland. We must also remember that at that period it was also impressed upon the country, in the spirit in which the present Bill has been drawn and proposed, that the relation between landlord and tenant ought to be a purely commercial relation; and unless it was such no satisfactory result could be obtained. The consequence of this was that a great body of proprietors, men of capital, sense, and science, entered into a bargain at the invitation of the State, which they on their part have rigidly fulfilled. They no doubt introduced a treatment of those who were dependent upon them, as regards the tenure of land, very different from that which was expected by those who had so long enjoyed the facility and forbearance of the old Irish landlords—that body of men's conduct is now denounced, and their ruthlessness and rapacity beld up to public odium.

Sir, the right honourable gentleman the member for Liskeard (Mr. Horsman) said last night that, from the moment the Report of the Devon Commission was issued, this all-important question was trifled with by successive ministries who have endeavoured to deal with this question, who have given to its consideration great thought and labour, and who were prepared to stand or fall by the measures which they introduced. I must, though I hope with good temper, utterly repudiate the imputation of the right honourable gentleman. And I am bound to say from what I know of public life, such as I can observe from my seat in this House, I have no reason to believe that those who sit opposite to me, and who in the course of their career have also been responsible for Bills to establish more satisfactory relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland—I say I do not believe they were animated by any other spirit than we were. Sir, I cannot for one moment believe that they trifled with this question; but, on the other

hand, I am confident that they gave to it all the pains which learning and research could bring to the solution of this difficult question, and that they were prepared to exert the utmost of their Parliamentary influence to carry the result of their deliberations into effect.

The right honourable gentleman the member for Liskeard was himself, I believe, secretary to the Lord Lieutenant¹ for no brief period. I never understood that he introduced any Bill with regard to the land of Ireland, or, indeed, brought in any Bill upon any subject whatever connected with Ireland during his term of office. But we never placed upon the conduct of the right honourable gentleman that uncharitable interpretation which he has been pleased to place upon the conduct of those who fill both this and the opposite benches, who did attempt to deal with this question. Both sides of the House acknowledge that the right honourable gentleman the member for Liskeard is a superior person. When he did not introduce a Bill upon Irish land; when he did not during his tenure of office introduce a Bill upon any subject whatever in connection with that country; when, on quitting office, he informed us, to my wonder and surprise, and especially to the astonishment of the Earl of Mayo, that he had not brought forward any measure on any subject whatever because he found his office was a complete sinecure, we, still knowing what a superior person the right honourable gentleman was, did not put an uncharitable interpretation on his conduct, but said, 'This is a part of some profound policy, which will end in the regeneration of Ireland and in the consolidation of Her Majesty's United Kingdom.'

Now, Sir, let me remind the House of what they have probably forgotten—namely, what was proposed in reference to this subject by the Government of 1852, with which I had the honour to be connected. We laid upon the table of the House four Bills, forming a complete code as regards the land of Ireland. I can describe those four Bills in a sentence. They adopted every recommendation of the Devon Commission. Sir, if those Bills had passed we should not now have been discussing the measure of the right honourable gentlemen

¹ Secretary to the Earl of Carlisle from 1855–57.

opposite Circumstances, however, occurred which prevented these Bills from passing. There was a change of Government. Yet, in the interval that elapsed between the end of 1852 and the year 1860, what occurred with regard to legislation in respect of the land of Ireland? Every provision of these four Bills, with one vital exception, passed piecemeal during that interval. The limited owner was invested with power to make improvements, and to charge them upon the inheritance. That was a leading principle in one of the four Bills which I have said were laid upon the table. Before two years it was passed. The borrowing powers of the Irish proprietor generally were proposed to be extended. That was passed. The limited owner was permitted to enter into contracts with the tenant. That was passed. A consolidation and code of all the laws relating to landlord and tenant in Ireland was successfully passed by Sir Joseph Napier, although in Opposition, in 1860, and that code and consolidation included many valuable amendments of the law.

The particular Bill which we brought forward in 1852, which would have regulated the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, was referred, after the fall of our Government, to a Select Committee. The labours of that Select Committee I will not dwell upon, because it would weary the House, and time will not permit. They experienced various complications and many strange vicissitudes, but this was the result—every provision in the Bill that we brought forward to regulate the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland was adopted by that committee with one vital exception, and a Bill was at last passed in 1860 to regulate those relations, with the omission of what I consider to be a vital clause in the Bill of 1852—namely, that which gave compensation to the tenant for improvements, and retrospective compensation. I might have dwelt longer on this matter, but that I believe to be a fair and candid description of the proposals we made. And I say that the Government which made these proposals ought not to be subjected to the careless taunts of a gentleman who has been absent for some little time from the House, and comes back to denounce public men who have given most laborious thought to,

and incurred heavy responsibility in connection with, this subject, and who ought not to be told that successive ministries have trifled with it.

I was in favour, in 1852, of giving compensation to the Irish tenant for his improvements, and within due limits, and with necessary conditions of prudence and discretion, I was in favour of retrospective compensation. Sir, I am still of that opinion. I believe that in retrospective compensation there should be a term fixed—moderate and reasonable, not of too long duration—and that it should extend to all objects, without any exception. But, Sir, I regret to say, and I say it in passing, for hitherto I have not touched on the present Bill—I do not approve of that provision which would assume that all past improvements have been made by the tenant instead of by the landlord. Indeed, with such a condition I could not entertain the proposition to provide for retrospective improvements. Sir, it appears to me, though this is hardly the moment to touch upon the subject, and therefore I will advert to it only by a word, that the wisest course in that matter is to put the *onus probandi* upon neither party. I am quite certain that, as respects the landlord, it would act in a spirit of great injustice; it would require him to do things which he could never have anticipated that the law would have called on him to do; and with one bailiff who is dead, and another who is absent, without register or record kept of what has occurred, to ask him now to accede to a proposal which is novel, I will not say irregular, but certainly one of which this country has little experience—it is to my mind a most impolitic act to bring forward that proposition with respect to a subject upon which I hope now there is generally a mutual agreement.

Now, I find that this great question of compensation for improvements, especially retrospective compensation for improvements, which was included in our land code of 1852, is now proposed and conceded by the Government in the Bill before us. Well, Sir, that alone, in my mind, is a sufficient reason why I should assent to the second reading of this Bill. And here I would say one word before I proceed further with

respect to the position in which gentlemen on this side of the House are placed by assenting to the second reading I understand by assenting to the second reading of the Bill that I assent to its principle, and I look upon its principle to be an amendment of the laws relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland

I do not know what the Judge Advocate-General¹ means by his cheer I think he made a most indiscreet and inconsiderate observation when he fixed upon three provisions² of the Bill, respecting which he must have anticipated there must be great controversy, and, representing the Government, said, 'These are the three principles of the Bill, and every gentleman who votes for the second reading is pledged to those principles' The consequence of the speech of the Judge Advocate was, I am told, that several much-respected members of this House, whose votes upon this subject I should have been very glad to have seen arranged on the same side with mine, quitted the House Such is the result of a speech made by a man of talent, placed for the first time in a position to which he is unaccustomed Now, Sir, I have explained to the House, and I believe every gentleman on this side of the House understands, the principle of this Bill It is that we are prepared 'to amend the law relating to the occupation and the ownership of land in Ireland,' and when we go into Committee we shall consider its provisions

So far as my position is concerned, I might stop there I might have remained silent but for the speech of the learned Judge Advocate and the right honourable gentleman could not with reason complain if, when we went into Committee, he was met by amendments for which he is not prepared But, Sir, I think it better that we, not objecting to the second reading of a Bill of the vast importance of the present, should indicate the great points on which we think there is difference between us and the Government, and thereby indicate the course that we shall take in the scrutinising hours of the Com-

¹ Sir Colman O Loghlen

² 1 The legalisation of the Ulster custom, - The legalisation of other customs, 3 The grant of a property in occupancy

mittee, and perhaps induce the Government, before we reach that ceremony, to consider their position on those points, and meet us in that spirit of compromise which I flatter myself may distinguish our general labours in Committee. Therefore it is that, having guarded myself against the rash conclusions of the Judge Advocate, I will very briefly mention the points on which I have grave doubts at present, and on which, so far as I am advised, I shall feel it my duty, as others will feel it theirs, to ask the Government to reconsider their position; or if they will not do so, to appeal to the wisdom and patriotism of the Committee in which we shall soon find ourselves.

And now, Sir, the first point on which I had very grave doubts is as to the propriety of that proposition of the ministry which relates to what is called the Ulster custom. It appears to me impossible that the Bill can pass with regard to this part of the subject in the form in which it is framed: but the objections which I have are so very grave that they are objections to the principle, and it is my duty to place them at once before the consideration of the House. What is this first clause of the Bill, respecting the legality of what is called Ulster tenant-right custom? It is neither more nor less than asking Parliament to legalise the private arrangements of every estate in the north of Ireland. What is the Ulster custom? No gentleman has pretended to tell us. There is no such thing as an Ulster custom. There are a variety of customs as respects tenant-right in Ulster, as there are a great many such customs in the other parts of Ireland, but there is no gentleman who can tell us what the Ulster custom is; and this is so obvious and acknowledged that we have absolutely a notice on our paper at the present moment in which an honourable member for the first time attempts to make a definition of the Ulster custom, and asks Parliament to consider it.

Now, Sir, I consider that the utmost difficulty, not to say impossibility, lurks in the course which the Government are recommending us to take on this subject. I see no termination to the controversy, nor can I see what settlement even the highest authorities can bring to bear upon this subject, because their decision upon any one case will not decide another case,

for the reason that the circumstances which will be brought before the authorities will be ever varying. In my mind there is a complete fallacy in the argument that has been offered in the course of this debate by several gentlemen, and recently—I remember it better because it is recently—by the Judge Advocate-General, who says, ‘Why, all we ask is that you should do in Ireland what you have done in England: you have legalised the custom of tenant-right in parts of England, why should you not legalise it in parts of Ireland?’ The right honourable gentleman did not see or would not acknowledge that there is a vital difference between the two instances. The very language which we use upon this subject in this country indicates the difference.

My honourable friend the member for Lincolnshire (Mr Chaplin) in his able speech gave us a picturesque, an animated, and a true account of the admirable tenant-right which exists in Lincolnshire. But what is it called there? It is called there, as in other parts of England, the ‘custom of the country.’ Everybody knows it as a custom, because it is ancient, because it existed before the memory of man, because it is prescriptive, because it is certain, because it is both the custom of the country, and also the common law of England. But is there anyone who can get up in his place in Parliament and for a moment pretend that these qualities attach to any private arrangements that exist in Ulster? No one pretends that there is any custom of Ulster. There is no prescription, because it is not ancient, there is no certainty, because it varies under every rule. Then I want to know in what manner you will deal with this question of Ulster custom. Besides, even if it were a custom, I very much doubt the propriety, as a general principle, of legalising customs. The moment you legalise a custom you fix its particular character, but the value of a custom is its flexibility, and that it adapts itself to all the circumstances of the moment and of the locality. All these qualities are lost the moment you crystallise a custom into legislation. Customs may not be as wise as laws, but they are always more popular. They array upon their side alike the convictions and the prejudices of men. They are spontaneous

They grow out of man's necessities and invention, and as circumstances change and alter and die off, the custom falls into desuetude, and we get rid of it. But if you make it into law, circumstances alter, but the law remains, and becomes part of that obsolete legislation which haunts our statute-book and harasses society.

Therefore I say, as a general principle, I am against legalising customs. You cannot, if you are to legalise custom, legalise the custom of Ulster, because it does not exist. But if it does exist, what is the reason that you should have special legislation for the custom of Ulster? These agricultural customs exist in other parts of Ireland; you have provided for them in your Bill. Why should there be two clauses—one for Ulster and one for the other customs? Protesting against legalising customs, I say that, if the House in its wisdom decides upon that course, it will be expedient to get rid of this special legislation for Ulster, and to support a general clause upon the whole subject of legalising the agricultural customs of Ireland.

I now proceed to another part of the Bill, of which I entirely disapprove, and that is the compensation that is to be given for occupation. We have heard many objections to the principle of the clause. I may touch upon them, but I wish at once to state the reason why I particularly object to that clause. It is not upon the interest peculiarly of the landlord that I found my objection. My objection to this clause, which, at the first blush, recognises property in occupation, and which therefore I am not surprised has alarmed many gentlemen, is that this is a proposition which terminates at one fell swoop all moral relations between the owner and the occupier. Although some years ago we used to hear a great deal upon the subject, I doubt very much whether you can convert the relation between landlord and tenant into a purely commercial relation. There is something, I think, in the nature of the property itself—something in the inevitable consequences of local circumstances and local influences, that would always prevent such a consummation; and, as far as I can observe or have learnt, these circumstances have prevented the establishment of a purely

commercial relation even in Scotland, where the experiment would appear to have been tried under the most favourable circumstances. But of this I am sure, that it is a relation that never could be established in the case of circumstances such as mainly exist in Ireland. If ever there was a state of society in which the relations between landlord and tenant should be paternal, it is in a country where you have farmers of an acre, and where a man pays you, as my right honourable friend (Mr Gathorne Hardy) mentioned last night, 40s for his annual rent.

Now, Sir, this clause, in my opinion, terminates all moral relations whatever. No doubt there may be some gentlemen—and those probably who have least considered the subject—who will be surprised to hear that there are moral relations existing between landlords and their tenants even in the extreme south of Ireland. But among the most important moral relations between these two classes is exactitude in demanding and paying rent. Sir, moral qualities of a very high order are developed when the tenant does not pay you rent. For hearance in its most Christian aspect may then be exhibited in a manner that may claim the respect and admiration of society. There is no body of men who require forbearance to be shown to them more than those small Irish tenants. In what position towards them do you now place the Irish landlords, to whose sympathy and kindness the tenants hitherto have preferred a claim?

An industrious man, a hard-working and good man, is overcome, we will suppose, by some of those vicissitudes of seasons which Ireland is not exempt from, and he applies—as others have applied before, and not in vain—to the distinguished facility and good nature of the Irish landlord. But the landlord naturally asks, who is the man who thus comes to me with a claim for consideration? The relations that once existed, the relation of patron and client—a relation that, truly conceived and generously administered, is one of the strongest elements of the social system—no longer subsists. And the landlord says, ‘This man, who comes and asks me to exercise all the higher qualities of human nature—this man, under the law as it has now been constituted—is a man who is no longer my

tenant, but my co-partner. He may to-morrow, by the decision of some person that I have never heard of, claim seven years' rent from me, to be increased by at least three years' more rent if he leaves me unexhausted improvements, of the existence of which I am not even conscious. The value of my estate is only twenty years' purchase; he has consequently as much interest in the estate as myself. Why, then, should I suffer inconvenience and loss, or forbear from vindicating my rights? I say that this appeal of a tenant under circumstances such as I have described would be one of the very last which was calculated to touch the heart of a proprietor. But this is the position in which you propose to place landlord and tenant for the future, terminating all those moral relations which have prevailed, and even in the most unhappy times have been extensively exercised.

There are those who also object to the clause because, in their mind, it converts occupancy into property. If that were the case, the objections to the clause would be so strong that I could not bring myself to support it. But I have placed a different construction upon the clause—the same which was expressed with so much clearness the other night by my right honourable friend the member for the University of Dublin (Dr. Ball), who looked upon this as a constructive contract, which, though there was no lease between the landlord and the tenant, secured to him an equity and the opportunity of having complete cultivation of the land. That he could not have in a year or six months; and that may be a fair ground for giving the person who loses his occupancy a liberal compensation, though it appears to me that, under these circumstances, the compensation suggested by the right honourable gentleman would be excessive.

Well, Sir, there is another point on which I wish to make a remark, and only one. It is a subject which must engage our attention by-and-by, and that is the proposition of the right honourable gentleman in this Bill to make advances of public money for a variety of objects. Now, I am not prepared to say that it is not quite justifiable on the part of the State occasionally to make advances for the benefit of a class, with the con-

viction that in benefiting that class you are bringing advantage to the body politic generally. Under such circumstances, however, we have a right, I think, to look to these two considerations—that the advances should be made with good security, and that they should be made for a beneficial object. Now, Sir, I will not go into the variety of quarters to which, if this policy is admitted, under this Bill, advances may be made, but with regard to the tenant I must at once say that I greatly object to advances to the tenant in Ireland in order that he should purchase freehold. Our great object, as it appears to me, is to make the Irish tenant more efficient—to make his tenure more secure, as secure as we can without trespassing on the legitimate rights of property—encouraging him to dedicate and devote all his resources to the cultivation of the soil. That is, I think, our great object. If you induce the tenant to divert a portion of the capital which he ought to dedicate to the cultivation of the soil to the attainment of another and quite a different object, it appears to me no policy can be more unwise than that the tendency of which is to make at the same time of one man an inefficient tenant and a poor proprietor. Now, Sir, I well know that in a Bill for which I have a share of responsibility, and the full responsibility of which I am ready to take—the last Land Bill produced by the Earl of Mayo—there was a provision to make advances to tenants under certain conditions, but what was the object of those conditions? The object of those advances was to assist the tenant in the better cultivation of the soil. These advances were made for drainage, for building, for fencing, and by these advances you really increase the capital devoted to the cultivation of the soil. You render the tenant more efficient, you give him greater power and the opportunity of reaping greater profits. That is not the result of the proposition of Her Majesty's ministers in this case, and I will not relinquish the hope that when that question is fairly discussed in Committee, and when Her Majesty's Government have given to it further consideration, and become better acquainted with the feeling of the House, they may be induced to withdraw that part of the measure.

This, Sir, brings me to a point which has been noticed in

this debate, which is a very important one, but which does not appear to me yet to have received all the attention it deserves—and that is the purchase under the Landed and Encumbered Estates Acts. The defence by the Secretary¹ to the Lord Lieutenant the other night of the course recommended by the minister on that head was to me eminently unsatisfactory. It depended entirely on the quotation of what Judge Longfield wrote in a tract I believe recently published. Sir, I have great respect for the authority of Judge Longfield; but it did not appear to me, as I listened to the quotation, that it applied to the particular instance before our consideration at present, and I have since learnt, referring to the volume, that that is the case. There is no doubt that the purchasers under the Landed and Encumbered Estates Acts are not in any way debarred from the future taxation of the country, or the calls upon them which may be demanded by the necessities of the State and the nation at a period subsequent to those purchases. There is no doubt of that. No one would for a moment contend that because they purchased their estates in those courts and had a Parliamentary title, they were to be exempt from any demands which the wisdom of Parliament might call on them, in common with other property of the country, to meet. But that gives only an entirely incorrect view of the question before us. I do not know whether gentlemen on either side have seen a conveyance under the Landed and Encumbered Estates Acts in Ireland. If they have not, it is a piece of information they can easily obtain in the interval of this time and the Committee, and they will find it extremely instructive.

Now, allow me briefly to describe what a conveyance is under the Landed Estates Act. It is the shortest conveyance in the world; it is a Parliamentary title, and is given in a few lines. But it contains a guarantee: and what is that guarantee? That guarantee is a guarantee from the State against any other than the claims which are contained in a schedule engrossed and printed on the very deed of conveyance. Now, what are those claims in this schedule? Listen: these claims are the claims of the tenants on the estate. Every tenant is called upon to

¹ Mr. Chichester Fortescue, afterwards Lord Carlingford.

make his claim and send it in to the court signed with his name, before the conveyance is executed, and from these claims that schedule is drawn up. The purchaser receives a guarantee of his property free from all claims, except the scheduled list of the claims of the tenants, drawn up by themselves, which is on the very side of the conveyance. And how is it possible to contend that under such a guarantee you now can call upon the purchaser to satisfy claims of these very tenants which, according to your projected Bill, existed at the time of the purchase and even previous to the purchase?

It may be most wise and expedient, if you do legislate in this manner, and that tenants under these purchases should enjoy the same privileges as other tenants. That is a point I will not now argue, but it is quite clear that under those circumstances the new proprietor must be entitled to compensation, and you cannot move in this business without compensation. This is a matter which must be decided by lawyers, and I do not pretend to give an opinion on such a subject which shall be definite, but what I want to do is to put before the House the real state of the case, in order that you may understand that if there be a guarantee of this kind, the guarantee must be fulfilled. And no quotation from a treatise by a judge, writing on totally different questions, which may very easily be brought forward in debate, can settle a question of this grave and precise character. Much depends in the matter on the tribunal which will carry this Bill, if it become law, into effect.

The Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant the other night boasted of the simplicity of this measure. He said that for simplicity there had never been a Land Bill equal to it before, and of its simplicity he appeared perfectly proud. Now, without giving any final or general opinion as to the merits of the measure, this much I will venture to say, that a more complicated, a more clumsy, or a more heterogeneous measure was never yet brought before the consideration of Parliament. What moved the right honourable gentleman to get us into all the intricacies in reference to Ulster?

What a Hercules to kill or to be killed!

Why should he have made arrangements with regard to the three other provinces, and brought them in collision with this more favoured province? We have had to-night a detailed account from the honourable member for Galway (Mr. W. H. Gregory) of the principles on which a Bill upon this subject should be founded : and I am going to give my model of a Bill, and its recommendation shall be simplicity and brevity. I mention this in a whisper across the table, in the hope that the right honourable gentleman opposite may consider the proposal, and leave all the customs of Ireland alone. They are very effective at the present moment. If you legalise the custom, the chance is that you diminish the moral incidents of the arrangement without practically increasing the legal power. It is better to leave those incidents to work their way, as they have hitherto done, with very general satisfaction.

But if a man without a lease, and who had paid his rent, is evicted, why, let his case go before the tribunal you shall appoint: let the judge investigate all the elements of the equity of the case: and let him come to a decision which on one side shall guard the tenant from coercion, and on the other preserve the landlord from fraud. Why cannot you do this? You are going to create a tribunal. Then create at once an efficient tribunal, and delegate to it the authority I have mentioned. It would not be so great a violation of the principle of property as these complicated provisions before us. Then you would have a simple piece of legislation, and one which, I believe, with a few provisoes and additions, would satisfy the necessities of this difficult question.

What, however, should the tribunal be? I must say I have great doubts as to the manner in which the tribunal proposed by the Bill is intended to be formed. I will not now go into the question of the courts of arbitration, though I gathered from the mode in which the right honourable gentleman the Prime Minister spoke of them, that he has great confidence in those courts. I know it is a method which recommends itself to his generous and susceptible nature; but acting upon my own feelings, I should not like to go to those courts. Though the conception recommends itself by the

amenity of the design, I cannot believe that practically, in the present state of Ireland, they will be found to work with very great felicity. But if you do not succeed in your arbitration, you then go to another person, and that other person, in masquerade and graceful dress, is our old friend the assistant barrister. I have heard of him for many years, and in my time he has done a great deal of service. Well, the assistant barrister is a resident or a non-resident. (A cry of 'Non-resident!') I am told that in consequence of the state of Irish society he is always careful to be non-resident. The non-resident assistant barrister, educated in the four courts, acute and intelligent, is sent for to decide these questions between landlord and tenant, and, probably not being able to distinguish at first glance between a grass field and a field of young oats, is required to decide on all the conditions and circumstances of rural life, to enter into protracted accounts, and come to a determination on a matter in which considerations even of 'moral conduct' may largely enter.

Well, Sir, I cannot think myself that the assistant barrister, with that ignorance of country life which is an unfortunate incident of his position, is a person qualified to perform those first duties; but if he perform those first duties in a manner unsatisfactory to either party, that party will have the power of appeal, and on appeal, the matter will be brought before the Judges of Assize. Well, Sir, that sounds very grand and very satisfactory. There are few gentlemen on this side or that side who do not know something of assizes and the Judges of Assize. The judges are men whose every hour and half hour is mapped out before they embark on their great enterprise. The Judges of Assize are on Monday in this town, on Wednesday in another town, and on Friday in a third. They are followed by an excited and ambitious Bar, with their carriages in the railways full of briefs—full of the great trials which are coming on, causes which have engrossed and excited an anxious society for months, and from which they are to gain immortal honours—to be returned for boroughs, to be made Solicitor-Generals, and to rise to the highest positions on the Bench. Well, when the judges come to the first town where those great

exploits are to be fulfilled, and those great feats accomplished, where multitudes are waiting to receive them, and where the galleries are full of ladies—particularly if the cases are of a delicate character—all this great business is to be arrested because the first cases to be brought before the Judges of Assize are appeals from the assistant barristers on the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland.

Why, Sir, we know very well what will happen. Those appeals will demand from the Judges of Assize the concentration of their whole intellect. They will have to investigate the circumstances of a mode of life with which they are little acquainted, and which their acuteness alone will enable them to detach from the entanglements of the local lawyers. They will have to go into accounts, and they will have, in the language of this Bill, to do that which Judges of Assize will do with great care and the most solemn sense of responsibility—to enter on the ‘moral conduct’ of the parties, and see how far that ‘moral conduct’ affects the contract between landlord and tenant. And what will happen? Either their own time will be taken up with this duty—or what is more likely, the duties will be performed in a most unsatisfactory and perfunctory manner. You know something of this now in Ireland. You have an appeal from the Civil Bill Court to two Judges of Assize; and is that which takes place when those appeals are made, a satisfactory mode of administering British justice? No. Matters are hurried over, and questions are decided in a manner that gives little satisfaction: and every person present, except the suffering plaintiff or defendant, is delighted, because they are dying to hear the blazing eloquence of the great counsel who are ready to open causes with which these questions from the Civil Bill Court interfere.

Therefore I think, whether I look to your primary court or your court of appeal, the prospect is unsatisfactory. I know it will be said that nothing can be more unwise than to establish a new court for the trial of those cases; it will be said that it is the inveterate habit of a new court to make business. I agree that it is so. If you create a new court, in order to justify its existence and, perhaps, to increase the

salaries of its officers, it will do its duty with such fatal enthusiasm that there will be no end to litigation. I do not propose a new court. I ask the right honourable gentleman to leave out the first two clauses, to allow customs to work their beneficial and more convenient way as they do at present, and to permit the tribunal to decide on the equity of the case before it in the manner I have described. I believe that judges whom you may send down, as we do in this country, under the last Election Act would perform those duties satisfactorily. No man rates more highly than I do the learning, the eloquence, and the character of the judges at present on the Irish Bench, but I believe their learning could be more devoted to the public service, and I wish their eloquence and their high character could exercise a greater influence on public affairs. In fact, I must express my honest opinion that the judges in Ireland, with all their learning, eloquence, and high character, are not sufficiently employed for the benefit of the State and their own happiness. They might give to those questions all the learning and solemn authority which they require, and I think in that way you have a tribunal which would obtain the confidence of the country.

There is one point more on which I wish to say something. I believe it is a most difficult one, but I cannot help thinking that the more it is discussed and considered, the more public opinion and the opinion of this House will lean towards that result to which I confess I myself have arrived—namely, that it will be most unwise on the part of Parliament to interfere, as this Bill proposes to do, with the freedom of contract in Ireland. Sir, we have always regarded freedom of contract as being one of the greatest securities for the progress of civilisation. Just the same as we should say that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act may be necessary sometimes for public safety, so we may say that when a country suspends its freedom of contract, the State must be in a most dangerous or diseased condition. I cannot bring myself to believe that the condition of Ireland is such as to justify us in adopting what appears a permanent departure from one of the cardinal principles of a free and progressive State. I think we ought to hesitate before we

adopt such a course. I feel the difficulties which the Government has to encounter in dealing with this question. I am perfectly ready to consider it in any way in which we can possibly advance their general policy, without compromising what I must look upon as a sacred principle. I think the House ought to discard all pedantic scruples and all party feeling in dealing with existing circumstances; and I think we should be prepared, as far as existing circumstances are concerned, to support the general policy of the Government, and not to hesitate, even when we believe that it touches upon and injures general principles which we may consider of vital importance in the government of the country.

But although the exigencies of the State situation may demand and authorise such a course, that is perfectly different from our going out of our way permanently and completely, and announcing that Ireland is in such a condition that we cannot allow the two most considerable classes in the country—for the landlords and the tenants are, after all, the two most considerable classes in the country—to enjoy the first and most beneficial privileges of civilised life. Sir, I know very well with regard to this most important subject, that the right honourable gentleman may remind us of the present peculiar condition of Ireland. I, for one, am not insensible to the very great inconvenience, the more than inconvenience—the great injury to the House of Commons and to the State—of having to discuss this Bill and to decide upon this question in the present state of that country. I wish very much that the condition of Ireland now was what it was when we brought in our Bill on the subject of the tenure of land in 1852. I do not blind myself to the condition of that country now to the effect that that condition may have upon the Legislature; and it is against that effect that I should wish particularly to guard the House. I have not myself pressed Her Majesty's ministers upon that subject, although it is one that engrosses, and naturally engrosses, the public mind of England. But, whatever I may feel upon that point, I cannot doubt that there is one person in the country who feels it more keenly still, and that is the right honourable gentleman upon

whom rests the responsibility for the general condition of the country

I do not share the belief which some of my honourable friends appear to entertain, that Her Majesty's ministers could be insensible to the duties which the immense difficulties of the country now present. I could not allow the memory of old struggle connected with Ireland to induce me for a moment to press Her Majesty's Government to arrive at any precipitate conclusion upon a subject which demands the gravest—I may say the most agonising—consideration that a statesman could give to a public question, because to interfere in such a condition of affairs, and to interfere efficiently, is what any public man who deserves the confidence of his sovereign and of his country would shrink from with a natural feeling of distress and terror.

But, Sir, we cannot avoid, now that this question is before us, touching upon these subjects, although I trust that I shall always speak of them with temperateness and moderation. It is not the language of persons on either side of this House that upon these matters now arouse and alarm the nation. It cannot be said, if a statement is made as to the condition of Ireland, that it is a prejudiced or a hot-headed partisan, who has made some unauthorised statement susceptible of any explanation by a minister. Sir, we have had before us recently, within only a few days, the gravest document¹ almost that any country ever produced, containing descriptions of Ireland by men qualified by their high station, by their perfect freedom from all party passion, by the eminence of their august position, and by the consciousness of their solemn duty, to influence the opinion of the nation and of Parliament. Those charges have been noticed in this House, but the attention of this House has only been incidentally called to them, and I must say that I regretted that the right honourable gentleman the other night, when the charges of the Chief Justices of Ireland were alluded to, should have thought it consistent with his duty, with the stern reality of facts, to carp at expressions and to extract some petty sentences, with the object, if he had an object, of convey-

¹ The charge of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland at Lord Ford and of the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas at Meath.

ing to the House and to the country, that the country and the House had taken an exaggerated view of the state of Ireland.

I confess that when these two charges of the Lords Chief Justices of Ireland first appeared and were brought incidentally before our consideration, I was touched by a very different feeling, and influenced by a very different emotion from that which seemed to animate the right honourable gentleman. Who were these men who delivered these charges? I sat with them in this House for many years. They had no resemblance to each other, except in their talents and their learning, in their high character and in their candour. One was a Tory of Tories, and the other was a man of extreme opinions, belonging to a party professing the same. One was—it is painful to allude to such a difference, but when you treat of Ireland and Irish political matters you must do so—one was a Protestant, and the other was of the Roman faith. And these two men, rivals in politics, connected with different parties in the State, professing different religions, resembling each other, if I may presume to say so, only in that which was excellent and admirable, called upon to fulfil the most solemn duty of their offices, and to represent the condition of their country to their nation and their Sovereign, though viewing that country in different districts, adopted the same views and language, and conveyed the same result to an alarmed, and I might say an appalled community.

Sir, I know well that the condition of Ireland may act upon the decision of this House in the conduct of this Bill. I, who am offering to this Bill no factious opposition, who have given to it, as I promised, a candid consideration, and who, I trust, with the modifications which argument and reason may bring about, will yet be able to give it a cordial support, am most anxious that honourable gentlemen, on whatever side they sit, shall not decide upon the fate of Ireland in these most interesting and important relations of its most important classes in a spirit of panic. Do not let us vote upon this subject as if we had received threatening letters—as if we expected to meet Rory of the Hills when we go into the lobby. No, let us decide upon all those great subjects which will be brought under our

consideration in Committee, as becomes members of the House of Commons, for, depend upon it, if we are induced in a hurry and with precipitation to agree to such monstrous enactments as that the Irish people should not have the power, for instance, of entering into contracts with each other, the time will come—a more tranquil and a more genial hour as regards Ireland than the present—when the reproach we shall receive upon the subject will be made from Ireland itself, and they will say of the English people, they treated us in our hour of difficulty as those who neither comprehended justice nor deserved freedom.

WESTMEATH COMMITTEE, Feb. 27, 1871.

[It was perhaps not to be expected that the measures of 1869 and 1870 should operate all at once. Still less, however, was it to be expected that the necessity for coercive legislation arising immediately afterwards should not eagerly be turned to good account by a *Parliamentary Opposition*. Accordingly, when the Marquis of Hartington¹ early in the session of 1871 moved 'That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the state of Westmeath and certain parts adjoining, of Meath and King's County, the nature, extent, and effect of a certain unlawful combination and confederacy existing therein, and the best means of suppressing the same,' it was very natural that Mr. Disraeli should comment on the proposal as he does. It is needless to say with what delight this speech was listened to by his own side of the House; it being generally remarked that he was regaining his old brilliancy, which, until he spoke on the 24th on the Black Sea Conference, was thought to be under an eclipse.]

THE noble lord commenced his observations by confessing the sentiment of dismay with which he rose to make the proposition with which he has terminated his speech, and I quite sympathised with the noble lord. I thought it was a sentiment most natural, and it did him great honour, in my opinion, to be under its influence at that moment. Considering how the House of Commons has passed the last two years, the sacrifices which have been proposed and which have been submitted to, the unceasing vigilance, the teeming device, the constant energy, the great exertions that never have been wanting; remembering how legislation has been carried on, to the exclusion of all subjects of imperial interest but those which related to Ireland; how England has submitted to the postponement of measures of great importance, and Scotland has given up that darling scheme of national education which

¹ Became Secretary for Ireland in Dec. 1870.

we have found so interesting and entertaining this evening; and viewing what apparently is the result of two years of constant legislation by a Government elected for the purpose of introducing an entirely new system in the administration of Ireland, and which cannot for a moment pretend that it has not been supported generously by the House in any of the measures which it deemed necessary to consummate this great end, I can quite understand, or, at least, I could quite understand until the closing observations of the noble lord, that he rose under a feeling of some dismay.

But, according to the noble lord, in his concluding sentence, there is no reason whatever why he should be dismayed, the state of Ireland at present, in the instance of this disturbed county and the adjoining districts, is exactly that which we ought to have expected. He tells us that religious equality, that agricultural equity—great ends which have been attained under his administration—were never for a moment to be counted on as a means by which a state of society such as he now introduces to our notice could be ameliorated. If that be the case, why should the noble lord be dismayed? The noble lord should pluck up his courage. If he is to succeed in the singular proposition he has made to-night, he should have come forward, not as a daunted, but rather as a triumphant minister. He should have said, ‘It is true that murder is perpetrated with impunity, it is true that life is not secure, and that property has no enjoyment and scarcely any use, but this is nothing when in the enjoyment of abstract political justice—and by the labours of two years we have achieved that for Ireland. Murders, incendiarism, and assassinations are things scarcely to be noticed by a minister, and are rather to be referred to the inquiry of a committee.’

Now, after the somewhat perplexing address of the Chief Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, let me recall the attention of the House to the position in which honourable member find themselves to-night, after the notice which was given forty-eight hours ago. Suddenly the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant comes down and announces the appointment of a secret committee to consider the state of a portion of Ireland,

and not only to consider its state of combination and confederacy against the law, but also to devise means for suppressing the same. That was the way in which the question was put before us. Now, however, we are told it is not to be a secret committee; but have the Government well considered the effect of making such an announcement to the world, and expressing an opinion that it was necessary to have a secret committee to consider the condition of a portion of Ireland? Why, the telegraphic cable must have flashed the announcement to America forty-eight hours ago, and what do you think must have been the effect of it on those treasonable confederacies which are always in action—and are at this moment in action, as we know—against the authority of England? What must have been the effect of such an announcement? It must have produced a conviction in their minds that the Government found the whole state of society in Ireland undermined, and that the authority of the Queen was in imminent danger. To announce forty-eight hours after this that it is not the intention of the Government to propose a secret committee, indicates a tone of levity in dealing with a great question which ought not to pass unnoticed.

Surely a minister who proposes a secret committee on the condition of Ireland, by that proposition alone incurs the gravest responsibility. Now, to-night we find it is not to be a secret committee, and then, to our great surprise, we find that it is also a committee which is not to devise means for remedying the evils complained of. Then what is the committee to do? Observe the description of this district of Ireland, where there are not only these evils, but these spreading evils—observe the description of it given by the Minister. It is brief and terse in the extreme. He tells us it is intolerable. He tells us the state of Ireland is intolerable (No, no!)—that the state of a great portion of Ireland is intolerable, and therefore will want inquiry (No, no!). Well, that the state of a county in Ireland is intolerable. Is it reduced to that? Is a county in a state so intolerable that you must come to a senate to ask for a committee to inquire into it? Can you not get out of the difficulty without coming to the House of Commons, and

asking it to appoint a secret committee to devise means to govern a county?

Well, Sir, secrecy is given up and devising means is given up; so the question is, 'What is this committee to do?' Every impartial member on either side of the House must have felt the difficulty, and asked himself that question. Why, the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant gave us ample explanations as to the various means by which he might have gained complete information on all points which the Government required to guide them in order to meet the evils of this district; and, indeed, under the very Act which we passed last year, they have powers—extraordinary powers; so that, for instance, if there is a felony committed in a district, they can summon witnesses before them and examine them, even although such witnesses may not be connected with the felony. Why, what power has a committee of the House of Commons compared with this power? I would impress on the House the inexpediency of assenting to a committee which is to relieve the Government from their responsibility as an executive.

But the noble lord, who says he will never appear in the sheet of a penitent and holding the taper of remorse, told us to-night that, whatever the original intentions of the Government were, it is not their intention now to ask this committee to devise any means to suppress the evils of which they complain, and which they describe as intolerable. I would say myself at once that, so far as I am concerned, I am perfectly prepared to support the Government in any demand they may make upon their own responsibility to terminate an evil which they describe, and I believe justly describe, as intolerable. There is no need to enter into an antiquated history of the horrors of Ribandism to induce the House of Commons to come to this conclusion. We know the evil. We have long heard of the evil and of the perpetration of these new crimes and these new horrors; and I was only astonished that in Her Majesty's gracious Speech from the Throne they were not referred to with more distinctness. We have recently had from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland an announcement with reference to them which prepared us for the legislation which I suppose

the Government will come forward and propose; and if the Government would come forward and propose a remedy, I think I might venture to answer for every gentleman on this side of the House that he would give it an unflinching support.

The evil is intolerable and ought to be put down, and we are prepared to support Her Majesty's Government if, in the exercise of their constitutional functions, they come forward and propose a measure instead of asking the House of Commons to enter upon an inquiry into the matter. The matter is urgent, and the business of a committee is necessarily always long. A committee—to do what?—to examine officers of the Government, to examine magistrates, to call for information from a miscellaneous multitude of witnesses? Why, a committee of inquiry for such purposes is always in existence. It is the cabinet of the Queen. They have the best information, and they are selected men, who are supposed to be most competent to decide on that information; and on the results of their deliberations and on their convictions they ought to introduce a measure and not move for a committee, when the state of an Irish county is intolerable. Let the standing orders be suspended if the case is urgent.

The noble lord has made some reference, from that richness of precedent with which he has been crammed on this occasion, to what occurred in 1852, and in the midst of the distress of this regenerating Government of Ireland, supported by a hundred legions, and elected by an enthusiastic people, in order to terminate the grievances of that country and secure its contentment and tranquillity, he must needs dig up our poor weak Government of 1852, and say, 'There was Mr. Napier, your Attorney-General, he moved for a committee, and you were a member of that cabinet.' If I had had a majority of one hundred behind my back I would not have moved for that committee. I did the best I could, and I passed a good Bill by a respectable majority.

But was the situation in which I was placed similar to the situation of Her Majesty's present ministers? Look for a moment to the relations which this Government bear to the House of Commons with regard to the administration of Ireland.

The right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Gladstone) was elected for a specific purpose: he was the minister who alone was capable to cope with these long-enduring and mysterious evils that had tortured and tormented the civilisation of England. The right honourable gentleman persuaded the people of England that with regard to Irish politics he was in possession of the philosopher's stone. Well, Sir, he has been returned to this House with an immense majority, with the object of securing the tranquillity and content of Ireland. Has anything been grudged him? Time, labour, devotion—whatever has been demanded has been accorded, whatever has been proposed has been carried. Under his influence and at his instance we have legalised confiscation, consecrated sacrilege, condoned high treason; we have destroyed churches, we have shaken property to its foundation, and we have emptied gaols; and now he cannot govern a county without coming to a Parliamentary committee! The right honourable gentleman, after all his heroic exploits, and at the head of his great majority, is making Government ridiculous.

If he persists in this absurd suggestion I shall leave it to fortune to decide what may be its results. If he will bring forward a measure—an adequate measure—a measure which will meet the evil, he will be supported. The late Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant knows very well what is the measure that will meet the evil, because he plaintively asked the magistrates at Meath what he should propose to help them out of their difficulties; and they met in quarter sessions, passed a resolution, and told him what was necessary. What the magistrates told the late Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant will be the groundwork, the gist, and the pith of the measure which Her Majesty's Government must bring forward. Under certain circumstances they will have to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act; but after the flashy speeches of the right honourable gentleman opposite upon that subject, we must have a Parliamentary committee as a veil in order that he may save his self-love.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BILL (IRELAND), March 11, 1873.¹

[This Bill was introduced by Mr. Gladstone on February 13. It was generally believed at the time that Cardinal Manning had induced Mr. Gladstone to think that the Catholics would accept the Bill; but that it was thrown over under peremptory orders from Rome. The debate on the second reading, the rejection of which was moved by Mr. Bonrke, began on March 3, and after lasting four nights ended in the defeat of the Government by a majority of 3—the Ayes being 284, the Noes 287. It had been supported at first because Mr. Gladstone was understood to say the Roman Catholic hierarchy would accept the compromise. A declaration from the Roman Catholic bishops published on February 28 destroyed all expectation that the Bill would be a settlement of the question. The exclusion from the teaching of the new University of theology, ethics, and metaphysics, completed its discomfiture. Both Roman Catholics and advanced Liberals combined against it and ensured its rejection. Mr. Disraeli spoke on the last night of the debate, and his speech, according to the *Times*, turned the scale. Mr. Cardwell had said on a previous night that the Government were ready to make all concessions that were required in a Liberal direction. Many members, however, did not happen to hear what fell from Mr. Gladstone afterwards, just as the House was breaking up. The Prime Minister said that the statement of the Secretary for War only meant that Government would be perfectly willing to consider certain questions in Committee. Mr. Disraeli acted on this rather untimely explanation with practised skill, and brought it up again on the last night to bear upon those wavering Liberals who, doubtful from the first of the intentions of Government, had been nearly reassured by Mr. Cardwell's declaration.]

MR. DISRAELI: Sir, I think it convenient occasionally in a long debate, and especially at the period at which this has arrived, that the House should take a general view of its

¹ This speech is reprinted from Hansard's *Debates* by permission of Mr. Hansard.

position, and ascertain, and accurately as it can, what is the real issue before it. Now, Sir, in the course of this discussion which has occupied much time, but the duration of which ought not to be measured by the time which has elapsed since it commenced, because during that period several evenings have been devoted to other subjects, many admissions have been made and many remarks have been offered by persons of authority which have given to this debate somewhat of that character which, to adopt a now fashionable epithet, may be described as 'bewildering.' We have heard on several occasions that various points which have deeply interested us in the course of this discussion have ceased to be essential; but these declarations have not been sufficiently distinct, nor made, to my mind, from persons of adequate authority. The honourable and learned gentleman the member for Oxford (Mr. Harecourt)¹ made last night, on the part of the Government, a speech which would have become an Attorney-General. He stated the case of his clients with considerable dexterity. He passed over some portions of the Bill, which I am apt to think are still of great importance, partly by bestowing upon them a parliamentary nickname,² and partly by confidentially informing us that they were dead already.

But we have not as yet received any distinct intimation from any member of Her Majesty's Government to that effect. The debate of last night concluded by a remarkable speech from the Secretary of State for War,³ which has formed the corpus upon which the comments of this evening have been made, and which appears, indeed, to have exercised a considerable influence upon the impending vote. We have been told this evening that the right honourable gentleman the Secretary of State surrendered every point of controversy in regard to this Bill. But nobody seems to have remarked some observations which followed those of the right honourable gentleman, and which were made by his chief the Prime Minister, in which he most distinctly disclaimed the inference that any point of any kind had been surrendered. I am sure I have no intention of

¹ He was made Solicitor-General soon afterwards.

² The 'gagging clauses.'

³ Mr. Cardwell.

misquoting the right honourable gentleman. I desire accurately to reproduce his language. The words of the right honourable gentleman were uttered as the House was breaking up, but were faithfully reported. The language of the right honourable gentleman was that the statements which had been so frequently referred to as having been made by Ministers of the Crown respecting the portions of this Bill in which there might be some changes, amounted only to this—that if we entered into committee on the Bill, Her Majesty's Government undertook that all those points should be fully discussed. 'Not,' as the right honourable gentleman added, 'that these statements meant that we admit that we were in error, or that we were not disposed to support the propositions which we had made.' I believe I have accurately if not verbally given the remark of the right honourable gentleman. Well, but this ought to induce us to consider our position with considerable caution. Of course if we go into committee all those points will be fully discussed. What on earth else do we go into committee for, but to discuss them?

Now, I have had rather a long experience of this House. I have seen many important measures brought forward by both sides of the House; I have heard many objections to those measures, I have heard ministers promise and very properly promise, in vindicating the second reading of their Bill, that if the House would only go into committee all those objections should be fairly discussed. But I have generally seen that when they have gone into committee, not one of those objections has been carried. Now, I am sure that the House will act on the present occasion with the caution which is necessary. Last night, after the speech of the Secretary of State, my honourable friend the member for Northumberland (Mr. Liddell), with that business-like perspicuity which distinguishes him, said, 'What need is there for any further discussion? We had better at once go into committee. The Government have nothing to propose, and the House may then proceed to business.'

But with great deference that was not the proper course. The interpretation which my honourable friend the member for Northumberland places upon the speech of the Secretary of

State is not the correct one, but is, as I must assume, entirely incorrect. If it had been true, indeed, that Her Majesty's Government had given up every point of importance in their Bill, the proper course for Her Majesty's Government would have been to withdraw the Bill. Not, of course, after a second reading, in order to obtain a vote of confidence. If Her Majesty's Government want to obtain a vote of confidence under such circumstances, they should apply not to a 'candid,' but to a sincere friend. That is the parliamentary practice. There is the honourable member for Surrey (Mr Locke King). The honourable member for Surrey, after recent proceedings,¹ could scarcely refuse to propose a vote of confidence. And this I can say for myself, and many gentlemen on this side, we have no wish to oppose it. If Her Majesty's Government have not the confidence of the House of Commons, I want to know what have they the confidence of? It is a House returned under their auspices ('No, no') Well, elected under the exciting eloquence of the right honourable gentleman. When I remember that campaign of rhetoric, I must say I think this House was formally as well as spiritually its creation. The course to which I have referred would be the natural course of proceeding, but really, to ask the House to vote for a Bill which it does not approve, in order to prove its confidence in the Government, is not one which I think would be satisfactory. That which I have indicated is the usual and the constitutional one.

But, Sir, under these circumstances—there being no proof whatever at the present moment that Her Majesty's Government have relinquished a single clause of this Bill—nothing, if my version of what has occurred be correct, being more certain than that the right honourable gentleman the First Minister of the Crown has stated that all that they are pledged to is that if we go into committee, every point should be fully discussed, while

¹ On March 5 1873 a testimonial was presented to Mr Locke King by his constituents. The presentation dinner took place at Croydon, and Mr Gladstone who attended made a long speech in honour of the guest of the evening especially complimenting him on his 'political independence.' Mr Locke King, in proposing the health of Mr Gladstone declared that the Liberal party had every confidence in him.

at the same time he declared that his own opinion was not changed, that he and his colleagues did not think themselves in error, and were prepared to maintain the propositions which they brought forward—I want to know what can I do but consider the Bill before me? I cannot assume, because the honourable member for the city of Oxford tells me that the clauses which I think most objectionable are already dead—I cannot assume on his assertion—at least not yet, that those clauses are withdrawn.

Well, under these circumstances, I must consider the Bill as it has been presented by the right honourable gentleman, and as it has been explained in the speech in which he introduced it. Sir, I will consider the measure first upon its merits. I will not now inquire what are the causes of its introduction into the House, or what may be the consequences of the measure if it is passed. I think the fairest and most proper mode is to consider it first on its merits. I object to the Bill for many reasons, and I object to it first because it is a proposition to institute a university which is not universal. Now, I do not pretend for a moment to say that I expected the new University of Dublin should teach everything, nor am I sure that it would be easy to fix upon any university, ancient, modern, or mediæval, which did fulfil that condition. But this I say with some confidence, even to the right honourable gentleman, whose academic knowledge is so great—that there is no instance, at least none with which I am acquainted, in mediæval or modern times of any attempt to establish a university for the study of the faculty of arts, the most generous of all the faculties, where there has been simultaneously a proposition to emasculate that faculty and to mutilate that generous study.

Of that I believe there is no instance. And in arguing this case I must virtually consider that the proposition for the new University of Dublin is a proposition for an institution founded mainly to enter into the studies comprehended in the faculty of arts. No doubt there are other faculties that will be connected with the University when established; but after the speech of the right honourable gentleman, and after the manner in which he dilated on that particular faculty, I assume—indeed, the right

honourable gentleman admitted it himself—that it was to secure a faculty of arts for the people of Ireland that this great institution was to be established. Well, I say there is no instance whatever of a proposition to institute a university founded mainly for the study of the faculty of arts, where at the same time it was proposed to mutilate that faculty, and interdict the study of some of its most important branches.

But before I touch on that part of the subject, in order to prevent any confusion, I would remind the House of an important provision in this Bill which has been very slightly touched upon in the course of the debate, and which cannot be considered under the head of the faculty of arts, and that is the proposition to transfer the faculty of divinity from Dublin University to another body. Now, in the first place I doubt—I more than doubt—the power to transfer a faculty in this country. A faculty in foreign universities is a corporate body, and you can transfer a corporate body. There are instances in foreign universities in which a faculty has been transferred from a university in one part of Germany to a university in another part, and with that faculty would of course have been transferred its property, but a faculty in an English university—and Dublin University follows the system of the English Universities—is not incorporated.

A faculty, as I understand, is not incorporated in the University of Dublin. This is not a mere technical objection—it is not a mere affair of words. What will happen in this case? First of all, instead of transferring the faculty to the new body called the Irish Church body, you must legally destroy the faculty of divinity in Dublin University. You must then create a faculty of divinity in the Irish Church body, and you must confiscate the property of the old faculty of divinity, and finally you may transfer that property to the Irish Church body. But the House will see this is a very strange and violent proceeding. It is not at all to be effected by the Bill which is now before us. And this led me to ask the House to consider this point—what is the necessity of depriving Dublin of its ancient and famous faculty of divinity? I can easily conceive that in olden days, when the University was founded on tests—and so far as Trinity College is concerned it is virtually free from tests, for it

is not the fault of Trinity College that it is not emancipated from them—I can easily conceive that in the olden days of tests, and when there was a faculty of divinity with compulsory attendance, there might have been an overwhelming majority in the House who, if it had the opportunity, would have abolished such a faculty. But that is no longer the case; and if the University is to be open to all without compulsory attendance, why, I ask, is this faculty of divinity, which has been so long a brilliant, a successful, and a famous faculty, to be abolished?

There is another point connected with this, also of much importance. The faculty of divinity in Dublin has the high privilege of conferring degrees: does the right honourable gentleman propose by this Bill, if he succeeds in the previous part of his operation, to transfer the privilege of conferring degrees in divinity to the Irish Church body? That ought to be answered. If he does not, the Protestant Episcopalian population of Ireland will be placed in this remarkable position, that there will be no power in Ireland to confer a degree in divinity. That is a matter for consideration. But perhaps the right honourable gentleman will say it is his intention that the Irish Church body to whom the faculty is to be transferred should have the power of conferring degrees in divinity. I should like to know from the right honourable gentleman whether that is his intention. Perhaps he will say that the sixteenth clause provides for this. Now, when I look at the sixteenth clause I find that religious bodies in Ireland shall have the power of conferring degrees. Now, is that a serious provision or is it not? Are we to understand that the mumpers and jumpers are all to have the power of conferring degrees? This clause is to transfer to religious bodies the power of conferring degrees. It is an extraordinary proposition. I remember a few years ago there was a sect peculiar to Ireland called the White Quakers. They had a grievance, and they communicated frequently with me upon it. I did not clearly see it, and I did not bring it before the House. I had a becoming prescience, for if I had taken up their case they might have conferred a degree upon me.

I think this a monstrous proposition—to abolish the theological faculty of a University like Dublin, to transfer the privilege of conferring degrees in divinity, I will not say to an unknown, but certainly to an untried body, however respectable, and by virtue of a clause—if the clause has that virtue, which I doubt—which permits any religious body in Ireland to confer a degree. To confer a degree is a prerogative of the Crown, and it ought to be one of the most precious prerogatives of the Crown. I thought we were living in times in which we were so shaping our course and taking such means, that the period had arrived when a degree would be highly valued, and the delegation of such a prerogative by the Crown would be considered by any corporate body one of the greatest honours and privileges. It does not appear so from the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Look at this clause—it is a short one, it will be found it is only a saving clause, and I doubt very much whether under that clause such a privilege can be exercised. In what a position you place the whole population of Ireland connected with the Anglican Church if, when the Bill is passed, there be no power in Ireland to confer a degree in divinity! This point has not as yet been brought out in discussion, and it seems to me to be one of much importance. I find there are prejudices on the subject in many quarters, but I must express my great regret that in the new University the right honourable gentleman has not proposed a faculty of theology. I do so upon this ground—whatever may be your arrangements, I do not think you will be able to prevent the study of theology to a certain degree in any university, and hence you will find yourselves in a position of embarrassment.

Recently I was looking over a programme of lectures on Oriental literature, about to be given next term in the University of Cambridge. I have no doubt that many gentlemen have perused with interest the same programme. Lectures are to be given by most eminent men in Sanskrit, in Hindustani, in Hebrew, and in Arabic. I remember the lectures of the Professor of Arabic are to be upon the Koran, he is to give a series of lectures to undergraduates at Cambridge on the

Koran. There is nothing in this Bill to prevent a professor of Arabia in the new university giving a series of lectures on the Koran; there is nothing to prevent him giving a series of lectures on Buddhism, on the religion of the Vedas, or on that of Zoroaster. If professors are competent to lecture with ability on such subjects, we all know what a spell they can exercise over their audiences. Their enthusiasm and erudition, and the mystical element connected with such studies, make a combination which has an entrancing effect on youthful students. Their lectures will be attended, but by whom? By youths who are not educated in the religion and theology of their own country. A professor may not contrast Christianity with Buddhism or with the Koran, and so you bring about a state of things in which the youth of that university are acquainted with the dogmas of every religion except their own. This is a preposterous proposition, and it shows you are entering upon an unnatural course when you begin in a university by destroying the sources of knowledge. A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning. It is a place for the cultivation of the intellect, for invention, for research; it is not a place where you should expect to find interdiction of studies, some of them the most interesting that can occupy the mind of man.

Now, Sir, though I will treat it very briefly, I must say something about the extraordinary clauses that attempt to interdict the public study of some of the greatest subjects which hitherto have engaged the intellect of men, and which clauses, we have been told, but not on sufficient authority, have been withdrawn from the Bill. If I had the slightest intimation that they would be withdrawn, I should only be too glad not to touch upon them. I must press upon the House that we have had no satisfactory evidence of the kind. We must remember we are embarked upon the discussion of one of the most unfortunate measures that could be brought before the consideration of Parliament—important, not so much for the specific object which appears to be the ultimate result of this measure, if it be passed, but because of the great principles which are involved in many propositions which are contained in this Bill. I treat

the proposition to omit from a new university, founded, above all things, for the study of the Faculty of Arts, the study of philosophy, as one of the most astounding that could have been made, and that it should have been made by a British minister in the House of Commons, of all places, and by the minister who is the leader of the Liberal party, does indeed astonish me.

I had always considered that some knowledge of the laws which regulate the mind and of the principles of morality made the best foundation for general study. But if ever there was a period in which a minister founding a new university should hesitate before he discouraged the study of metaphysics and ethics, it appears to me to be the age in which we now live. This is essentially a material age. The opinions which are now afloat, which have often been afloat before, and which have died away, as I have no doubt these will die in due time, are opposed to all those convictions which the proper study of moral and mental philosophy has long established. And that such a proposition should be made with respect to a university which has produced Berkeley and Hutcheson makes it still more surprising. We live in an age when young men prattle about protoplasm, and when young ladies in gilded saloons unconsciously talk atheism. And this is a moment when a minister called upon to fulfil one of the noblest duties which can fall upon the most ambitious statesman—namely, the formation of a great university—formally comes forward and proposes the omission from public study of that philosophy which vindicates the spiritual nature of man. I will say upon this subject what I have already intimated with regard to the crude and unwise attempt to abolish the Faculty of Theology. You will find it difficult—almost impossible—practically to carry your project into effect. The right honourable gentleman will perhaps tell me he has not abolished the study of philosophy, either mental or moral. I know that it is quite true that all who attend his projected university may prosecute this study. Yet, they may not. The fact is that all the encouragement is given to other studies. These are abstract ones, and you will naturally find that when the honours and the emoluments

given to other studies, those which are abstruse and difficult will not be pursued. But that by the way.

What I want to impress on the House is that this monstrous proposition, while it will do a great deal of harm, will not even effect its purpose. How can you prevent lectures on philosophy? For instance, suppose the Latin professor wants to give a series of lectures, as the Arabic professor may on the Koran; it is very natural that he should give lectures on Lucretius. Indeed, at this moment it is a probable circumstance. The waning reputation of English scholarship has lately been vindicated by an admirable edition of Lucretius, which does honour to Cambridge, and is worthy of the days of Bentley. I refer to the edition of Lucretius by Professor Munro. Now, an accomplished professor in the new Dublin University might take Munro's 'Lucretius,' and give lectures on that work. What becomes of his students? They will soon find themselves involved in the atomic theory, and will have protoplasm enough if they read the work with the discrimination which under the lecturer's inspiring guidance of course they would.

There is scarcely a theory of Darwin which may not find some illustration there, and the student may speculate on the origin of things and the nature of providence; and what is the consequence? Why, in this university once so celebrated for its moral and mental philosophy, the professor will be addressing a body of students totally unprepared by previous studies to bring into intellectual play the counteracting influences which any youth could do who had been properly schooled in the more modern, the advanced and improved philosophy of the times in which we live, and in the mental discoveries which have been made in England and Germany. The student may be learned in the gardens of Epicurus, but everything that has been discovered by the great thinkers of our generation is to be entirely unknown to him. I need not pursue this subject further. How can a professor lecture on Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero without lecturing on philosophy? is he always to be lecturing to a class of students unarmed and undisciplined in the profound and rich learning which is the boast of modern ages?

I will say one word on the omission of the study of modern history. The right honourable gentleman may try to vindicate that omission, because modern history does not figure in the curriculum of the old universities. That, however, is, in my opinion, no adequate excuse for a great university reformer, or for a statesman who is about to establish a new university. I thought that even in our old universities, at least for the last forty years, we had been endeavouring to expand the curriculum. We have introduced new sciences; we have introduced the study of history, and though it may not be found in the old curriculum, every one, I think, would assume that if a new university were about to be founded the study of modern history would constitute a part of the Faculty of Arts. Just as it was extraordinary that the right honourable gentleman should fix on an age of material scepticism to abolish the chair of philosophy, so it appears to me most remarkable that he should determine not to have a chair of modern history at a period and in an age when the study of history has become a science, and when, indeed, there are many principles of historic criticism now accepted, which are as certain as the propositions of Euclid. This is the moment at which he chooses to subvert this study.

But the right honourable gentleman will, I think, find even in the study of history that his object is not attained, and that directly and collaterally there will be constant controversies in the university on historic matters, though there may be no professors to guide and enlighten the students. But, so far as I can read the Bill, and it is the only point with reference to this part of the subject which I will now make, it is not merely the study of modern history which is forbidden. It seems to me that the professor of ancient history will also be involved in great peril. I do instance, the mind of Europe, and I might say of America, has been formed by two of the smallest states that ever existed, and resembled each other in many particulars. Both were divided into tribes; both inhabited a very limited country, and not a very fertile one. Both have left us a literature of startling originality, and both on an acropolis reared a most splendid temple. I can conceive the unfortunate professor in the new university, restricted in his choice on so many sub-

jects, deprived of divine philosophy, not permitted to touch on the principles of ethics, looking around him at last with some feeling of relief, and fixing for his lecture upon the still teeming and inexhaustible theme of Athenian genius. He would do justice to the Athenian tribes—their eloquence, their poetry, their arts, and their patriotic exploits. But what if the professor lecturing on ancient history were to attempt to do the same justice to the tribes of Israel? He could hardly deal thoroughly with Hebrew history without touching on the origin of the Christian Church, and then it would be in the power of a single one of his audience to threaten the professor, to menace him for the course he was pursuing, and to denounce him to the council, who, if they had a majority—and a majority of one would do—might deprive him of his chair, and his chair of a man venerable for his character and illustrious for his learning. A single vote would do, and probably it would be carried by a single vote—the vote of Carlow College!

This brings me to the consideration of the council of the university. I am dealing with the Bill on its merits, without any allusion to the causes of its production, and without the slightest reference to the consequences to which it may lead. There is in the council one remarkable feature which it appears to me has not been sufficiently noticed. It is, so far as the Bill is concerned, despotic; the power of the council is uncontrolled; it is unlimited, or limited only in this, that it must not consist of philosophers or modern historians. When we consider what the power of the council of a great university like this must be, and when we consider that in this case they will be unlimited and uncontrolled, when we bear in mind that a majority of one can exercise a complete authority over the professors, the examinations, the lectures, the books—a most important matter—the Schools of Medicine, the Schools of Law, and the Faculties of Arts, I am not surprised that my honourable friend the member for Lynn Regis (Mr. Bourke), and, I think, with no unconstitutional curiosity, should ask that we might be enlightened upon the matter. Sir, how was he answered by the right honourable gentleman? The right honourable gentleman, as if he were fresh from an interview with

some secret deviser of this Bill, at once meets us with a *non possumus*. But although the right honourable gentleman might demur to furnishing at once all the names of the council of this university, still he will allow me to remind him that he gave us no information whatever, and the Bill gives us no information of their character and quality. (Mr. Gladstone dissented.)

Well, the right honourable gentleman will follow me, and that is a great advantage. Do not let him grudge me the opportunity of making a simple statement. It appears to me that no information whatever is given—at all events, that there is a want of information upon some points upon which I will ask the right honourable gentleman, and he can reply at his leisure. I want to know, if he will not give me their names, what is the quality of these anonymous persons? What is their situation? Are they laymen or are they clerics? Are they to be paid or unpaid? Are they to be resident or are they to be provincial? By what means do you propose to enforce their attendance? What is the *commune vinculum* among them? Sir, these are questions which the right honourable gentleman failed to anticipate in his original statement, and some provisions, some enactments on such subjects might surely have been expected to appear in his Bill. Well, this council is to consist of twenty-eight persons. How are they to be obtained? They are all to be distinguished men. They are all to be—and I thought the expression was a happy one—they were all to be ‘eminent men, and of moderate opinions.’ Now, no one is more prepared than I am at all times to do justice to Irish genius. I have not the slightest doubt that under any circumstances there will be no lack of distinguished men in Ireland—no lack of eminent men; but perhaps there may be some difficulty in always securing men of moderate opinions.

Sir, how are these things generally managed? I could give the names of twenty-eight men in Ireland, distinguished men—men whose names are known not merely to the United Kingdom, but, I might say without exaggeration, to Europe. That those twenty-eight men would be of irreproachable character is not to be questioned for one moment. There would

be no difficulty about obtaining men who, from their learning, eloquence, and their political experience could not easily be matched either in any part of Her Majesty's dominions or the world in general. Now, the House is pretty well aware how twenty-eight gentlemen would be obtained under the circumstances. I suppose that Cardinal Cullen would be one of them, and His Eminence would be paired off with the Primate of the Protestant Church. Then, under the circumstances in which we are placed, the Provost of Trinity College would be a most admirable councillor, and would pair off against Monsignor Woodlock. Then would come Lord Chancellor O'Hagan, who would probably pair off with the right honourable gentleman who filled the same office for us. But what would be the result? Why, you would have in your council very much what you have in this House—two parties organised and arrayed against each other, with two or three trainers thrown in on each side.

Now, Sir, what has interested me much in this discussion is the light that has been thrown by several honourable gentlemen on both sides on this matter of a council by reference to the National Board of Primary Education in Ireland. My acquaintance with that Board is not, of course, very extensive, but when I was in office circumstances happened which made me acquainted with the conduct of the Board, and I believe it was average conduct. What was their conduct in that instance, as put before me? Constant divisions, slight majorities, majorities of one. But that is not the way in which the groves of Academe are to be administered. You may tolerate that in a Board of Primary Education, for it is a Board entirely of modern institution; but let me impress upon the House that there is a total want of analogy between the anonymous council of the right honourable gentleman for this great university—if it is to be a university let it be a great one—and the Board of National Education in Ireland. The power of the University Council is, as I have shown you, unlimited. They have at once to create all the rules of this great university. They have to devise everything. The Board of National Education, on the other hand, whatever may be their violent cliques, are a limited

power—they have to create nothing. Parliament prepared, Parliament devised all the rules and orders under which the primary education of Ireland was to be carried on. There is no similarity between the two cases. Every year the doings of the Board of National Education are brought necessarily under the cognizance of Parliament by the vote which we are called upon to agree to; and even if that were not the case—if their course were so eccentric and unreasonable that it was no longer to be tolerated—the minister, if supported by Parliament, has the power to put an end to their existence, and dismiss every member of the Board.

What similarity is there, then, between that Board and the anonymous despotic council who, at their own instance, are about to create a constitution for the university? Suppose this council differ—and it is not impossible that they will differ—suppose they thwart each other; suppose some of the passions which have influenced even the humbler Board of National Education are not absent from this Olympian assembly; suppose they compromise the first principles of education. Take, for instance—I need not confine myself to the Faculty of Arts—the School of Medicine, a celebrated school in Dublin. Suppose they do not agree as to what hospital shall be attended by the students of the university. That is not at all an improbable affair. It is a question very likely to arise. I see there are great religious cliques and coteries in Dublin about hospitals. There are Roman Catholic hospitals, and there are Protestant hospitals. Very likely that will be the first thing the council will quarrel about. And suppose they come to no agreement in this, and say—which is very likely—‘We will have no Medical Faculty at all.’ Suppose they did the same thing with regard to Law. Then there would be no Faculty of Law. You will find when the new university is established that these dissensions will necessarily arise from the party elements of which you have it.

Now, Sir, it has been said in this debate that there is a great inconsistency in the Roman Catholics opposing a measure which the Protestants equally oppose, and some honourable gentleman told us the only inference we could draw from

that was that the measure was a just one. No doubt there is a plausibility, though of a shallow character, in that observation, but I should hardly think the right honourable gentleman, who has plenty of resources at his command, will make use of it, though it is not impossible, if an inferior artist were in his place, that he would play upon that string for some time. Now, the fact is that if the matter is looked into, there is no inconsistency whatever in the course which the Roman Catholics have adopted in this matter. That I must do them the justice of saying. The Roman Catholics have an inexorable objection to united education. They believe that in the matter of faith and morals—and those matters in fact, with their definition, include everything—Roman Catholics ought to be educated by Roman Catholics. Their opposition, therefore, to a measure like the present, may be—and I have no doubt is—most sincere, because they go upon the principle that they will oppose everything which is adverse to the principles they sincerely believe to be immutable.

But the Roman Catholics, however high and firm they may be in their principle, are, like children of this world, wise in their generation. If they find that their resistance has been ineffectual—if they find that all their attempts to defeat this measure are unavailing—I have not the slightest doubt, and who can blame them?—that if this Bill were to become an Act, they would immediately set to work to obtain as much good in their view of the case as could be obtained in realizing as nearly as they possibly can the views which were submitted to their acceptance by the President of the Board of Trade, and converting your compromise as soon as they possibly could into their supremacy. Sir, I have not the slightest doubt that that would be their course, and that they would be perfectly justified in that course. I have not myself any doubt that if this Bill is passed in the shape in which it is laid upon the table, and as we have a right, so far as ministers are concerned, to believe it is the only shape in which it will pass, the views which were expressed by the right honourable gentleman the member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) were perfectly correct, and that this Bill can be worked, to secure a Catholic majority upon

the Council, and through that Catholic majority to obtain complete control over Irish university education. Nor do I express that as being any discredit or to give any offence to the Roman Catholics. It is exactly the course which under similar circumstances we ourselves would take. There is nothing whatever inconsistent in the opposition—the internecine opposition—which the Roman Catholics generally offer to the measure of the Government at this moment, with the fact before us that if we establish this university—if this Bill should pass—the university would ultimately become a Roman Catholic university. The first duty of the Roman Catholics is to maintain their inexorable principle as they regard it, the next is to make the most of the circumstances which they have to encounter, and those who think that by saying that the Roman Catholics are opposed to this Bill, and the Protestants are opposed to it, that therefore the measure must be adjudged a just one—those who think that by expressing those platitudes they are really offering unanswerable syllogisms to the House, only give another proof that the affairs of man are not regulated and ruled by logic.

Now, I would say one word upon the position of the Irish Roman Catholics particularly in reference to this matter. Sir, they are no supporters of ours. They have never supported us, although, as far as I am concerned— I should express now what I have ever felt—my respect for an ancient race and an ancient faith. But I regret the position in which they find themselves. That position, however, is in a great degree owing to their own exertions. We have had many allusions in this debate to the conduct of the late Government with respect to this subject. These allusions have been made in Parliament before, but slightly and casually, and I have listened to them with a silent smile. I have always been of opinion, as a general rule, that there is no waste of time in life like that of making explanations. One effect of the imputations that have been made upon myself, and I think I may answer for my colleagues—not only upon this but upon other matters—has been to make us at least charitable to our immediate opponents, and they never hear from me taunts about their secret correspondence

and communications with parties with whom they ought not to hold those communications, or as to the stories which are prevalent in this House, because I have not the smallest doubt that in their case they are as utterly false as they are in our own.

Now, Sir, let me, as the direct subject is before us—as these were not casual observations about a policy framed to catch the Irish vote, or what was called by a high authority at the commencement of the debate, piscatorial efforts to obtain Irish influence and support for the Government—let me make one or two remarks upon the conduct of Her Majesty's late Government with regard to this very question of Irish University education. Sir, the late Lord Derby was certainly not an enemy to a system of united education. He might be said to have been its creator, and among the great services to his country of that illustrious man I know none that were more glorious. He never flinched in his opinions on that subject. The matter of Irish education was brought before him shortly after the formation of the Government of 1866. But by whom was it brought? It was brought before his consideration by men who possessed, and who justly possessed, the entire confidence of the Protestant Church, and the Protestant University of Ireland. It was at their instance that his attention was first called to the matter.

Let me remind the House—for though it is modern history I may be pardoned for referring to it—let me, I say, remind the House of the general system under which Ireland was governed a few years ago, a system, however, which had prevailed for a considerable time. It was a system which endeavoured, not equally, but at the same time gradually to assist, so far as religion and education were concerned, the various creeds and classes of that country. It had in its rude elements been introduced into Ireland a very considerable time back, but during the present century it had been gradually but completely developed, and it was called or has been called of late years, concurrent endowment. I am not going to entrap the House into a discussion on the merits of concurrent endowment, for concurrent endowment is dead, and I will tell

you in a few minutes who killed it. But this I will say of concurrent endowment, that it was at least a policy, and the policy of great statesmen. It was the policy of Pitt, of Grey, of Russell, of Peel, and of Palmerston. The Protestant Church of Ireland under that system had held its property of which, in my opinion, it has been unjustly and injuriously deprived. The Roman Catholics had a magnificent and increasing collegiate establishment. The Presbyterians had a *Regium Donum* which I always was of opinion ought to have been doubled. So far as Lord Palmerston was concerned—and Lord Palmerston was always called the Protestant Premier—he had prepared, and had himself recommended in this House, to secure to the Roman Catholics their glebes.

That policy is dead. But, Sir, when Lord Derby had to consider this question, he had to consider it under the influence of that policy. Devoted as he was to the cause of united education, it was his opinion, on the representations which were made to him by those who represented the Protestant Church, the Protestant College, and the Protestant University of Ireland, that the position of Roman Catholics with respect to university education was, I will not say 'scandalous,' but one which demanded the consideration of statesmen. Propositions were made, and placed before him. It became our duty, according to our view of our duty, to place ourselves in communication with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. We thought that was the proper course to pursue—that it was better to attempt to bring about a satisfactory settlement of which there appeared to be some probability by such straightforward means rather than by dark and sinister intrigue. The Roman Catholic prelates were delegated to this country to enter into communication with the Government. Unfortunately when the time had arrived, power had left Lord Derby, and I was his unworthy representative. I did not think it my duty, or for the public service, to place myself in personal communication with those gentlemen, but two of my colleagues did me the honour of representing me and the Government on that occasion—one of them eminent for his knowledge of Ireland and of the subject, the late Lord Mayo,

and the other a man distinguished for his knowledge of human nature, the late Lord Privy Seal (Lord Malmesbury). And I am bound to say that they represented to me—and I mention them as competent judges of the matter—that those negotiations were conducted by the Roman Catholic prelates with dignity and moderation. Sir, I may have been too sanguine; but there was a time when I believed that some settlement of this question, honourable and satisfactory to all classes, might have been made. I am bound to say that no offer of endowment was made by the Government. I am still more bound to say that no offer of endowment was urged—although it might have been mentioned—by the Roman Catholic prelates. I am bound to say this because the right honourable member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie) referred to a document of much more ancient date—a communication from Sir George Grey, which conveyed a different view. I suppose the Roman Catholic hierarchy had profited by the experience of that negotiation. It is unnecessary to dwell on these particulars. The right honourable gentleman says I burnt my fingers on that occasion. I see no scars. The right honourable gentleman opposite was a pupil of Sir Robert Peel. He sat in the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston, who was supposed to be a devoted votary of the policy of concurrent endowment. The right honourable gentleman, suddenly—I impute no motive, that is quite unnecessary—but the right honourable gentleman suddenly changed his mind, and threw over the policy of concurrent endowment—mistaking the clamour of the non-conformists for the voice of the nation. The Roman Catholics fell into the trap. They forgot the cause of university education in the prospect of destroying the Protestant Church. The right honourable gentleman succeeded in his object. He became Prime Minister of England. If he had been a little more patient, without throwing over concurrent endowment, he would, perhaps, have been Prime Minister as soon. The Roman Catholics had the satisfaction of destroying the Protestant Church—of disestablishing the Protestant Church. They had the satisfaction before the year was over of witnessing the disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church at Rome. As certain as

we are in this House, the policy that caused the one led to the other. It was the consistent and continuous achievement of a man who is entitled above all others to the reverence of Protestants—and that is Cardinal Cullen. For if there be one man in the world more than another to whom the fall of the Papacy is attributable, it is His Eminence. He was and has been the prime promoter in this country of the alliance between Liberalism and the Papacy. And now, Sir, see what has occurred. The Roman Catholics having reduced Ireland to a spiritual desert, are discontented, and have a grievance, and they come to Parliament in order that they may create for them a blooming garden of Eden.

The Prime Minister is no ordinary man. (Ministerial cheers.) I am very glad that my sincere compliment has obtained for the right honourable gentleman the only cheer which his party have conferred upon him during this discussion. The right honourable gentleman had a substitute for the policy of concurrent endowment, which had been killed by the Roman Catholics themselves. The right honourable gentleman substituted the policy of confiscation. You have had four years of it. You have despoiled churches. You have threatened every corporation and endowment in the country. You have examined into everybody's affairs. You have criticised every profession and vexed every trade. No one is certain of his property, and nobody knows what duties he may have to perform to-morrow. This is the policy of confiscation as compared with that of concurrent endowment. The Irish Roman Catholic clergy were perfectly satisfied while you were despoiling the Irish Church. They looked not unwillingly upon the plunder of the Irish landlords, and they thought that the time had arrived when the great drum would be fulfilled, and the spirit of confiscation would descend upon the celebrated walls of Trinity College, would level them to the ground, and endow the University of Stephen's Green.

I ventured to remark at the time when the policy of the right honourable gentleman was introduced that *contagion* was contagious. I believe that the people of this country have had enough of the policy of confiscation. From what I can

see, the House of Commons elected to carry out that policy are beginning to experience some of the inconveniences of satiety, and if I am not mistaken, they will give some intimation to the Government to-night that that is their opinion also. I conclude from what has passed that we shall not be asked to divide upon the amendment of the honourable member for King's Lynn (Mr. Bourke). Let me say on the part of the honourable member that the object of his motion has been much misunderstood, and misunderstood especially by the right honourable gentleman the Prime Minister. The right honourable gentleman is greatly mistaken if he supposes, in the first place, that his was a party motion. It is nothing of the kind. It was a spontaneous motion on the part of the honourable member, and had been adopted by him in consultation with only a few academic sympathisers, who I believe chiefly sit on the other side of the House, and has been brought forward simply because there seemed to him to be a strange apathy with regard to this question in this bewildered assembly, and because he thought that some discussion would make us understand the question more fully than we appeared at first to do.

When the right honourable gentleman introduced this measure, after listening to his speech, I humbly requested three weeks in which to consider it—a period of time which did not appear to me to be unreasonable. That request the right honourable gentleman with great amiability refused. He told me that I was not to judge of the measure by his perhaps too lengthy address, because, when the Bill was placed in my hands, as it soon would be, I should find it of the simplest possible character. I think by this time the right honourable gentleman has discovered that my request was not unreasonable, and that the House of Commons has discovered that three weeks was not too long a period in which to study a composition so peculiar and so complicated in its character.

Although I was far from willing to make this question the basis of anything like a struggle of party, although on the contrary I have endeavoured to prevent such a struggle, I have

been hindered in that endeavour by the right honourable gentleman himself. It is the right honourable gentleman himself who has introduced so much passion, and so much, I may almost say, personal struggle into this question. It was the right honourable gentleman who, as the First Minister of the Crown, in introducing a question of a nature somewhat abstruse, and which to the majority of the honourable members of this House must have been not easy to comprehend, commenced his harangue by saying — 'I am introducing a measure upon which I intend to stake the existence of the Government.' That was in my opinion an unwise and rather an arrogant declaration on the part of the right honourable gentleman. I have certainly known instances where ministers introducing into this House large measures which had been prepared with great care, and feeling for them is much solicitude as the right honourable gentleman does for this Bill—I have certainly known instances where, after protracted debate, and when opinions appeared to be perhaps equally balanced in this House, ministers have felt themselves authorised, under such circumstances, to say that they were prepared to stake the existence of their Government upon the question at issue.

But, on the other hand, I do not recall an instance of any minister who, on an occasion similar to the present, prefaced a laborious exposition, which by its very length and nature showed that it dealt with a subject which only the transcendent powers of the right honourable gentleman could make clear and lucid to the House by saying — 'But I tell you, in the first place, that I stake the existence of the Government upon it.' I trust the right honourable gentleman has profited by the remarks which have been made in the course of this debate, and that he now feels that upon the occasion of introducing this measure his vein was somewhat intemperate. No one wishes to disturb the right honourable gentleman in his place. If the right honourable gentleman intends to carry out a great policy—that of confiscation—I wish at least that he shall not be able to say that he has not had a fair trial for that policy. I wish the House and the country fully to comprehend all the bearings of that policy of the right honourable gentleman.

But, Sir, although I have not wished to make this a party question, although I certainly have no wish to disturb the right honourable gentleman in his seat, although I have no communication with any section or with any party in this House, I may say, with any individual but my own immediate colleagues, I must do my duty when I am asked, ‘Do you or do you not approve of this measure?’ I must vote against a measure which I believe to be monstrous in its general conception, pernicious in many of its details, and utterly futile as a measure of practical legislation.

COMPENSATION FOR DISTURBANCE BILL August
1880

[The Compensation for Disturbance Bill was a measure introduced by Mr Gladstone's Government immediately after his accession to office as a temporary expedient for putting an end to the disorders of Ireland till Parliament should reassemble in the following spring. The gist of it was the suspension of the right of eviction for the ensuing eighteen months, in other words it proposed that under certain conditions eviction for non payment of rent which the tenant was unable to pay in consequence of the bad seasons should be deemed to be 'a disturbance' within the meaning of the Act of 1870, and entitle the evicted person to compensation accordingly. The Bill was only carried through the House of Commons by the votes of the Irish party, but in the House of Lords was rejected by a majority of 282 votes to 21. On the second night of the debate August 3, Lord Beaconsfield following the Duke of Argyll spoke to a very full House and was listened to with profound attention on both sides.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD My lords, the measure we are called upon to consider to night on the second reading is very brief in its terms. It consists of only three clauses, but they are clauses which in their consideration require some reference to the past, some deep attention to the urgent present, and scarcely can be touched upon without some speculation upon the consequences to which, if this Bill is adopted, they will lead. My lords, the origin of the question of landlord and tenant in Ireland in modern days was the famous Devon Commission. In the report of that Commission, drawn up by men of great ability, admirably qualified for their office, and one of the most valuable reports which was ever presented to the consideration of Parliament—in that great source of information on a question the most complicated probably of the public questions that can engage the attention of the Legisla-

ture, all the information which during subsequent years astonished, alarmed, and engaged the attention of the country, was furnished and is to be found.

From the moment the report of the Devon Commission ¹ was presented to Parliament for its consideration there was a general feeling among the public men of both the great parties of the State that the subject was one which would require legislation, and that legislation of a comprehensive and most careful character. To effect the improvements of the condition of the Irish people, there laid down as necessary, and at the same time to reconcile any changes that might be deemed expedient with that respect for the rights of property which all wise men know should be the only, or at least, the main basis of liberty and civilisation,—these are questions which engaged the attention of the late and the present generation. Some delay may have occurred in coming to any general conclusions on the matter, but that delay may have been occasioned, and was, no doubt, in a great degree occasioned, by the difficulty and the vastness of the questions which had to be considered; and was also occasioned, no doubt, by that system of party government in this country among whose many advantages may be accounted certainly not this, that it often leads to delay in the settlement of affairs of an exigent nature.

But I may remind your lordships that as early as the year 1852, after some attempts had been made, but not of a very large character, to legislate for the state of Ireland, founded on the conclusions recommended by the Devon Commission, a Government was formed in this country, of which I had the honour to be a member, which resolved to deal with this question, and if possible to grapple with it. I always read quotations from ‘Hansard’ with regret; but the quotation to which I am about to refer is not long; it offers no opinion, but at the same time it expresses in so condensed a form the situation of the question of the state of Ireland with respect to the Devon Commission that I hope your lordships will permit me to read it. I wish the words had been uttered by anybody else but myself; but, as they really only express

¹ See p. 341.

what was intended, and give no opinion on political subjects, I am sure your lordships will excuse me for presenting them to your notice. I mentioned that legislation had been proposed in 1852 for the purpose of remedying that state of society on which the noble duke has dilated with so much fire and at so much length.

The noble earl then proceeded to read extracts¹ from a speech which he made in 1870, pointing out that four Bills had been introduced in 1852, in which every one of the recommendations of the Devon Commission had been adopted, that circumstances had, however, happened, in that year which prevented those Bills from passing, but that in the interval between 1852 and 1860 every provision of those Bills, with one important exception, had been passed piecemeal. The landowner had been empowered to make improvements on his property and to charge it on the inheritance, while Sir J. Napier, though then in opposition, had succeeded in passing a measure for the consolidation of the law of landlord and tenant.

I will not read further extracts, but I do not think, after what I have just read, that the noble duke was justified in giving us the description of the condition of Ireland with which he has favoured us, which is a description which may be found really in the pages of the report of the Devon Commission, made between thirty and forty years ago, while he gives no credit whatever for the series of legislative measures to which I have adverted. There is no doubt that there has been a great improvement in the condition of the people of Ireland, and the noble duke with some inconsistency, after having dilated upon the picture of a miserable condition of Ireland, which is a picture of its condition many years ago, terminates his speech by a description of the buoyant prosperity which certainly we have a right to suppose has been consequent upon the legislation of the British Parliament.

We live in an age so rapid that we have got into a habit of forgetting what took place as recently as five years ago, and the Devon Commission, which is one of the most important

¹ Cf. speech on second reading of Land Bill j. 347

Parliamentary events that ever occurred, and which has had the greatest influence upon the condition of the relations between landlord and tenant and the general welfare of the Empire, is probably known to few and forgotten by many. It was in 1870 that the Land Act was introduced in the House of Commons by the present Prime Minister. What was our conduct in Opposition upon that occasion? From the speeches of the noble duke and other noble lords who have addressed the House, you would suppose the Tory party had never made the slightest effort to improve the condition of the people of Ireland. You would suppose that they had listened in mute silence or shown active opposition to every proposal which had ever been made on the subject, and that these proposals had only been made by Her Majesty's present Government. On the contrary, I wish Parliament to remember that we ourselves in 1852 brought forward four Bills that would have formed a complete code for Ireland, founded upon the recommendations of the Devon Commission, that not one single recommendation of that committee was omitted, and that the course of legislation which afterwards brought about the same result as was then contemplated, though we had not the honour of initiating it, was universally supported by the Tory party, and lastly, that every improvement in the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland that has taken place has been assisted by their Parliamentary support and vote.

What was our condition when the Land Act of 1870 was brought in? Why, my lords, we might, with a very clear conscience, have said, 'Our opinions are upon record upon the subject of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland; we have agreed to the recommendations of the Devon Commission, the highest authority upon the subject, and those recommendations have by our means and with our assent been universally adopted. This Bill of 1870 which you bring in is one which appears to us to be unnecessary, when you have not rested a sufficient time to allow the great changes that have been passed to mature and bear those fruits which the country expect,' and we might, if necessary, have plausibly opposed the Act. But your lordships will find that that was not the course

which we took in Opposition. On the contrary, there were many provisions in the Act of 1870 which we did not like, but the general policy of that Act was in harmony with the policy which we had always supported, and we consented to the reading of the Bill without opposition. It is very true that in the Committee we endeavoured to enforce those views which the Government had not adopted, or rather the rejection of those opinions which the Government ought not, according to our view, to have adopted, and it is true that a change in your lordships' House, as I think a very salutary one, has taken place, but it is upon record that the Bill of 1870 was carried by the House of Commons without any resistance on the second reading.

Though there were provisions to which we had objections, still we were perfectly prepared—and upon that we have always acted—to accept the Bill as a final and complete settlement, believing that its final and conclusive character was one of its excellencies. The great object of all legislation was to produce in Ireland that degree of improvement which would encourage the flow of capital from England and Scotland. Well, I believe that it did have a very beneficial effect in inducing the introduction of new capital, but I am not prepared to say myself at the present moment that any portion of the Act of 1870 which I would wish to be altered. But it is to be altered. We have this Bill now put on the table. Now, when I read this Bill, I find three proposals. I object to these three proposals. The first objection is because it imposes a burden upon the Government; it acknowledges that it has to deal with a very difficult problem, and then, I think most illogically and inconsistently, proceeds to say that the means by which the unexpected evils that have been met with shall have been furnished by only one class, not a numerous class, and at the same time, as well as the rest of the population. The second objection to this Bill is that it is introduced into all kinds of transactions; and the third objection is that it appoints a public

legates the extraordinary power of fixing the rents of the country.

Now, these are three objections which appear upon the face of the Bill, and which I think all must acknowledge—even those who may ultimately support the measure—to require considerable explanation and considerable hesitation before these proposals can be adopted. They are violations of those principles of public policy which now have been recognised, practised, and pursued by Parliament for half-a-century. And the reasons which are given, the precedents which are alleged, in order to justify this course—this unusual course—appear to me to be weak and entirely unsatisfactory. One of the great faults of those three proposals of the Government is this, that while they pretend to be of a temporary nature, they are essentially, from their character, regulations that must become permanent. And all the precedents which they allege in order to justify this irregular and unusual measure refer to circumstances which are essentially and necessarily of a temporary character.

The Seeds Bill, to which the noble duke alluded, is shown by its very name to be one of a temporary nature. Seed-time comes once a year, and you know very well that although you may provide seed for one year, if you make no other provision the law is temporary. Again, the extension of relief outside of the workhouse, to which the noble duke also referred, is a temporary measure, because it is perfectly clear that the country will not submit to an extension of a law of that description the moment the circumstances which forced you to adopt it have changed. And with regard to the third proposal—as to advances of money for a certain time at a certain rate of interest—that is a system which has long prevailed in this country, and we know very well that the capital thus advanced is duly returned to the Treasury, and every year you see the amounts which have been so returned after payment of the interest to the State. Therefore, the three precedents which have been brought forward are no illustration of the matters with which we are now dealing.

Well, my lords, this question naturally arises—You having introduced a Bill which contradicts all those principles of political and public economy of which you have hitherto been the

avowed champions in the State, what is the reason you allege for doing so? What is the cause of the introduction of this measure? Now it is a most remarkable circumstance that the cause alleged is certainly, were it a true cause, one which no doubt must affect the feelings and opinions, perhaps, of many. We are told, and we are told by an authority that cannot be well exceeded, that this measure—which, though slight in form and brief in matter, is one which avowedly interferes with the rights of property—is brought forward in consequence of the fear which the Government have, that if not passed we shall have, perhaps, to encounter civil war in Ireland. My lords, I must say there is no member of your lordships' House who would view the occurrence of any events in Ireland of that character with more profound sorrow than myself. These are not words of form. I was a member of a Government that had to encounter something like civil war in Ireland, and therefore I have some acquaintance with the feelings and responsibility which under such circumstances an individual would be subject to. I am sure, had it not been for the firmness of the noble duke who was then Viceroy in Ireland, the great resources and courage of the ever-blessed Lord Mayo, and—though he is present, I cannot refrain from saying it, because justice requires it—had it not been for the ceaseless vigilance of my right honourable friend behind me,¹ the noble viscount, who was then Secretary of State, it is possible very great evils might have occurred. My lords, that insurrection, supported by a powerful and unprincipled foreign conspiracy, failed. It failed, and it terminated at the same time by the exercise of the authority and the clemency of the sovereign of this country which, under similar circumstances, has never been exceeded or equalled. But if you ask me whether I could consent, for the sake of preventing disturbance of that kind in Ireland, to go forward and sacrifice, as the phrase is, the eternal principles of justice, I believe I should, under these circumstances, be inclined to say, 'I will not make that sacrifice.' And I believe that if civil war or any disturbance of that kind can only be prevented by the ministers of this country deviating strong

¹ Lord Cranbrook.

and fantastic schemes—which not only interfere with and invade the rights of property, but which lead, in my mind, to the very evil which they wish to prevent, and excite the multitude to the very catastrophe which they hold up to us as a warning—I should not shrink from that responsibility.

But, my lords, it is a very strange thing that when we hear accounts given us that the country—that a part of the United Kingdom—is in such a state, that if this Bill is not passed by Parliament we must be prepared in a time—in a measurable time—for civil war, we have no evidence of this desperate state of things. I want to know what evidence has been given to Parliament of the possibility of such a fearful state of affairs. We have not been led to believe that such a state of things was possible by the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. When they advised Her Majesty to address her Parliament at the beginning of the Session they put remarkable words into Her Majesty's Speech. The passage has been read, and therefore I will decline to read it now, but I call your lordships' attention to this particular expression, 'But while determined to fulfil this sacred obligation'—which was to provide for the safety of the lives and property of Her Majesty's subjects—'I am persuaded that the loyalty and the good sense of my Irish subjects will justify me in relying on the provisions of the ordinary law, firmly administered, for the maintenance of peace and order.' Now that is a very peculiar expression—'ordinary law.' I do not remember ever having met it before in a Royal Speech, and therefore there was nothing in the Royal Speech which for a moment would lead the people of this country to suppose that such a catastrophe as civil war in Ireland was possible.

Well, what happened afterwards? The opening of Parliament took place. The Government had the opportunity of intimating the fearful state of affairs in that country. They introduced a Bill for Irish relief, but there was no indication whatever of *this* Bill. They advised Her Majesty to issue a commission to inquire into the Land Laws; yet all this time elapsed and the poor people of Great Britain had not the slightest idea of the danger they were in—not the slightest

conception—while they were assured by the sovereign that the provisions of the ordinary law were all that Her Majesty required to defend their lives and property. When they heard of so innocent an affair as a Royal Commission to inquire into the Land Laws, not the slightest communication was made to Parliament respecting the imminence of civil war. That is not the way in which Parliament should be treated. In, I think, the year 1871, the year after the famous Land Act passed, the present Secretary of State for India, then chief Secretary for Ireland,¹ came down to the House of Commons and gave a most fearful account of the state of Ireland, and proposed that there should be a secret committee to inquire into its condition. It is very true that the House ultimately resisted the secret committee and insisted that its proceedings should be open, but that did not at all alter the opinion of the Government that the revelations made to the committee were of a nature that ought to have been secret. Why have we no committee if we are within a measurable distance of civil war in Ireland? Why have we not had communications made to Parliament of this threatened civil war in Ireland? I think even the present House of Commons might have acceded to a secret committee in the circumstances. But neither the House of Commons nor your lordships' House has had the slightest intimation upon the subject, and it is only when this measure is brought forward, originally introduced as a clause in a Bill of charity, that you are informed by the Prime Minister you are within a measurable distance of civil war.

My lords, I believe it is possible there may be disturbance in Ireland, and for this reason—because you have proposed this Bill, and, whether it be adopted or whether it is rejected, it is a measure calculated to excite the minds of an imaginative people; and if the distress, which I trust may be declining, proceed in that country, I think it is not impossible that in consequence of the very measures brought forward to avoid civil conflict, you may find yourselves involved in trouble and disaster. There is one feature about the present agitation in Ireland which is most repulsive, and, I think, most dangerous. Agitation in Ireland is not a novel subject. During the last

¹ Lord Hartington.

generation and the present it has been extremely active. It has taken many forms. It has been led by men of different characters and idiosyncrasies. It has taken the form of Repeal; it has taken the form of Fenianism; it has taken the form of Home Rule; and you may observe that all these movements had over them the varnish, no doubt, but a mere varnish of what may be called generous feeling. Even a Fenian was a patriot, or thought he was. When you had to encounter disaffection which was founded upon such transitory and superficial feeling, the Government had a great advantage. The moment of material prosperity generally terminated the most active campaign for repeal or for Home Rule. But if the present agitation is fostered in Ireland, and I believe 'this unhappy measure,'—to adopt as classical the description which one of its chief supporters gave of it¹—will have that effect; if, I say, this agitation is fostered by the Government, it is one which will not easily terminate, because it is an agitation addressed not to the romantic or imaginative, but, as the noble lord (the Marquis of Lansdowne) who addressed us with so much power so well expressed it, 'to the sordid instincts' of the Irish people. An agitation conducted by men who have been taught to believe that the property of others ought to belong to them, and that if they exert themselves must belong to them—an agitation conducted in such a spirit and for such a result, is one which Her Majesty's Government will find more difficult to deal with than the agitations of previous years.

The noble duke² who has just addressed us takes a very different view of these affairs. The noble duke appears to have studied the condition of the Irish people. He has given an interesting narrative to the House, though I am sure he is aware he made no statement which had not been made before, and adduced no facts with which the public mind was not familiar. If, however, I had entered the House at the time, I should not have guessed what was the subject of the debate from the speech of the noble duke. We are all agreed that the condition of Ireland is in some respects pitiable, and that the policy of England should be to elevate

¹ Lord Emly.

² The Duke of Argyll.

the condition of the Irish people. But we believe, and so, that for the last fifty years, with almost a continuous effort, that has been the policy of England, pursued by both the great parties of the State. But I could gather from the arguments of the noble duke no inference of that nature. The noble duke said that there was extraordinary agricultural distress in Ireland. Well, it is possible there is. We will admit it. But I cannot understand that the best way of alleviating the agricultural distress is by plundering the landlords. The noble duke brought before the House a subject with which I think he should have dealt either with more reserve or with more frankness, and that was the argument for the necessity of the measure in consequence of there being bad landlords in Ireland, hard, heartless, tyrannical, and cruel. He should have been prepared either to give a detailed statement on that subject, to allege facts, to describe owners, to give names, or I think he should have left the matter alone. Here we are to night, and the noble duke tells us there are 173,000 cottier tenants in Ireland, and then he says, 'Will you place these men at the mercy of a person who does so-and-so?' I did not catch the name of the person, I do not think the name was given, but the single instance of a bad landlord—and that an anonymous one—is supposed to affect the condition of 173,000 cottiers. There is no proportion between the case alleged by the noble duke and the remedy he recommends. I know he would not shrink in his view of public duty from making any statement on the subject. The noble duke¹ commenced his speech by saying that he was going to charge like the 'Six Hundred' of Crimean fame. If he had been one of the Six Hundred at Balaclava, I have no doubt he would maintain his reputation for courage. I thought he had got in his mind another Six Hundred connected with another place,² which at least resembles Balaclava in its initial letter.

I have now mentioned some of the causes why in my opinion this is a measure which it was unwise on the part of the Government to bring forward, and why I am anxious that the Bill should be rejected. I have shown that the question

¹ The Duke of Argyll

² Birmingham

of the government of Ireland, and this question of the relations between the landlords and tenants of Ireland never were, never ought to have been, and I trust never will be party questions. I was therefore rejoiced to find that it was not left to the regular Opposition, whose motives might be, as they always are, misconstrued, to ask the opinion of your lordships on this grave subject. Notice was given to move the rejection of the Bill by one who bears an illustrious name,¹ and we learn that the noble earl did not stand alone; but that he had some, perhaps many, political friends who sympathised with him. If the motion of the noble earl for the rejection of the Bill had been one of which the tendency was in any degree to arrest that great policy which now for nearly forty years has been supported by Parliament with respect to the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland, I certainly should not have supported it. But brought forward as it is, I feel it is my duty to do so, and that the views of myself and my friends on this subject ought not to be misunderstood. I confess myself that there is one more reason which makes me anxious that this Bill should be rejected, and that is the mode in which it has been introduced to the notice of the country and of Parliament. There have been rumours, ambiguous voices, circulated about for a considerable time that some large measure was about to be introduced or would be in due time, which would affect the character of the landed constitution of the country. Sometimes it was to be a great measure for Ireland; sometimes we were assured upon authority, though not the highest, that England would not escape the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Ministers. Upon every occasion there have always been some of their many supporters in Parliament who have exulted at the introduction of the Bill, and who have announced not only their hope but their conviction that the ministers next year would deal in the same spirit, but in a far larger way, with the question of land in England.

A gentleman² the other day was summoned to one of the greatest honours of the State—to be a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council—he himself a distinguished member of Parliament and one of the Administration; and after he had taken his

¹ Earl Grey.

² Mr. Chamberlain.

sent at the Board, he went to another board, to a political dinner presided over by no less a personage than the Lord President of the Council,¹ and here the new Privy Councillor, in language of the most inflammatory character, denounced the land, denounced the landlords of England, and said they had got a majority of the cabinet in their favour, and next year there would be a complete revolution of the land laws. The Lord President of the Council on that occasion did not reply to his right honourable friend, but, as far as we can judge, the views of his right honourable friend had the moral support certainly of his presence, and, as we feared, of his convictions. I know well there is a party hostile, and avowedly hostile, to that constitutional position which in our system of Government had been accorded to the landed interest. They are men who would sooner see a Government established by the application of abstract principles than resting upon the influence of tradition and upon the strength that results from experience. I do not believe this is a numerous party, but it is an intellectual party. It is intelligent and persevering, and it is actuated by that enthusiasm which novelty inspires, and by all that energy which I believe is a characteristic of minorities. This is the first time in the history of England that the leaders of this party have found a seat in the councils of the Queen.

My lords, I look upon this Bill as being what military men would call a reconnaissance in force. It is a reconnaissance in force to see what is the feeling of Parliament and of the people of England upon the present tenure of land in England, and upon the constitutional position in our system of government of the landed interest. It has been a most effective reconnaissance, though I cannot say it has been a very successful one. If they wished to know what is the opinion of the colossal majority of 170 in the House of Commons gained at the last general election with regard to this subject, they have learned that two-thirds of the majority on that occasion either kept away or voted against them. They have learned, also, that the Bill has been sent up to this House by a majority consisting merely of that section of the members of the House of Com-

¹ Lord Spencer

mons who treat the Bill itself avowedly with contempt, and who, with courageous candour, tell us they only adopt it because they consider it merely as a step to assist them in the transference of the soil from the legal possessor to the casual occupier.

I know well that it is difficult to persuade some minds that the opinions which are now circulated with great confidence are opinions that ought to be resisted by all those who love the greatness and the glory of their country. There is at the present day too great a tendency to believe that it is impossible to resist the progress of a new idea. There is a fashionable phrase now that everything is inevitable, and that every event is the production of a commanding cause of Nature which human will cannot resist. The despotism of public opinion is in everybody's mouth. But I should like to know, when we are called upon to bow to this public opinion, who will define public opinion. Any human conclusion that is arrived at with adequate knowledge and with sufficient thought is entitled to respect, and the public opinion of a great nation under such conditions is irresistible, and ought to be so. But what we call public opinion is generally public sentiment. We who live in this busy age and in this busy country know very well how few there are who can obtain even the knowledge necessary for the comprehension of great political subjects, and how much fewer there are who, having obtained that knowledge, can supply the thought which would mature it into opinion. No, my lords, it is public sentiment, not public opinion, and frequently it is public passion. My lords, you are now called upon to legislate in a heedless spirit, by false representations of what is called the public mind. This Bill is only the first in a series, the results of which will be to change the character of this country and of the Constitution of this country. The argument that you cannot stop upon this ground, urged by my noble and learned friend, has never been answered. If you intend to stop upon it you were not justified in making this proposition. The proposition is one I think most dangerous to the country, and I trust your lordships will this night reject it. If you do that you will do a deed for which your country will be grateful, and of which your posterity will be proud.

PROTECTION TO PERSON AND PROPERTY BILL
(IRELAND), March 1, 1881

[Crime in Ireland had advanced to such a dreadful pitch during the late autumn and winter that Parliament was called together the first week in January in order to take measures for the prevention of it. It was natural that the late Minister should consider the inflammatory language of the late Opposition during the autumn of 1879 as responsible for a good deal of the mischief.]

Having referred to the failure of the remedial legislation for Ireland in the past, Lord Beaconsfield avowed that he hesitated to pronounce a dogmatic opinion as to the causes which had rendered this measure necessary, but he believed they were first, the great suffering of the people from bad harvests, next, the appeals made to their passions at the last general election by politicians who impressed upon them that their sufferings were due to the late Government, and, lastly, the organised proceedings of conspirators in a foreign land, who passed to and fro from America to Ireland.]

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD I rise to support the Bill, but I must say I do it with reluctance. I support the Bill because I think it is necessary—absolutely necessary. My lords, I gather that in the nineteenth century, in the very heart of our country, in the United Kingdom itself, such a state of things exists as certainly justifies, and not only justifies, but renders it absolutely necessary, that a measure of this kind should be brought before your lordships. The periodical disquietude of Ireland has been accounted for at various times by various causes. When I first entered public life, nearly half a century ago, there was great Irish disquietude. We were then told by great authorities, philanthropic and political, that the cause of that disquietude was political, and that the only remedy for it would be to extend to a portion of the community the civil privileges which were enjoyed only by a part

of the population. But the political disquietude of Ireland reappeared in a few years, and we were then told that the cause was not political, but ecclesiastical, and all philosophers and politicians applied their minds to the consideration of remedies. They commenced by abolishing tithes ; they ended by abolishing the Church, which those tithes were intended to support. We are now told that the cause is very different—that it is agrarian or territorial ; and generally speaking we are led to believe that the remedy is in fact to transfer the property of one class to another. Now, my lords, I should be very sorry, after such experience, and the failure of even the wisest and most experienced statesmen, to attempt to discover the sole cause of this state of affairs in Ireland. I would not for a moment pretend dogmatically to lay down my opinion as to the cause, but I think it will not be presumption in me if I attempt on this occasion to indicate what I think are the immediate causes which have produced disquietude, discontent, and outrage in Ireland.

I think there are three causes to which the present state of affairs is to be attributed. In the first place, there has been great suffering in Ireland from a series of bad harvests. But Ireland has been visited before by famine, and yet it did not result in such a condition of outrage and lawlessness as exists at the present moment. At a former period England contributed to the relief of distress in Ireland with a readiness which cannot be too highly appreciated, and the good nature of the Irish people themselves combined for the purpose of alleviating the distress. As far as the present instance of distress is concerned, when that distress began to pinch the people I do not observe that there was organised disaffection. The Irish people know very well that sterile harvests were not peculiar to Ireland during the last few years, and that they extended to all European countries and even beyond the limits of Europe ; and England, which was the one country which sympathised the most with Ireland, was perhaps the one which suffered the most from that calamity. Then how is it that the present unfortunate state of things has been brought about in Ireland, when on former occasions it has been avoided ? This brings me to the second

point which I wish to advert to. It is most unfortunate that after a period of agricultural distress which has rarely been equalled—and probably its continuity has never been equalled—it is most unfortunate, I say, that at such a time the United Kingdom should have become the scene of a great party struggle, which has not been equalled for many years in the fierceness of the passions which it elicited. Those who appealed at such a time to the passions of the country felt that they were in a position of great advantage in appealing to the passions of a population that was suffering like the Irish were. The most violent orations were addressed to the Irish people, and in point of fact it was impressed upon them by very accomplished orators and by trained and skilled agitators that the sterile harvests under which they suffered were in some degree connected with the existence of the late Government. And they further sought to impress upon them that the opponents of the late Government were the only men who could bring forward measures equal to the occasion, and rescue them from the full consequences of those bad harvests. This style of oratory unfortunately brought about that which spreads like wildfire in Ireland—namely, an agitation of great fire and fierceness; and the most preposterous opinions were set afloat.

Even in such circumstances I myself should not have despaired of the good sense of the country ultimately steering us through all these difficulties and dangers; but, unfortunately, the moment there springs up in Ireland any considerable agitation, the Irish people come under the influence of an organised conspiracy of foreigners, living in a foreign country, who immediately obtain the control of the circumstances of the country, and who no doubt recently placed society in the United Kingdom in considerable peril. We have had it declared recently in another place that there is very great exaggeration in the statements which have been made with regard to the state of things in Ireland, and that there is no foundation whatever for the assertion that there is a body having considerable power and resources in a foreign country that acts upon Ireland. I believe, however, that Her Majesty's Ministers are perfectly aware of the truth of that assertion, and that they have wisely acted in

asking Parliament for the powers which the Bill will confer upon them. Those who have served Her Majesty in troublous times in Ireland—especially of late years—know the truth of that assertion, and of the existence of a state of things which makes it absolutely necessary that Her Majesty's Government should possess the powers asked for, to defend Her Majesty, not from her rebellious subjects, but from foreign conspirators who are constantly passing to and fro between another continent and these islands, and whose efforts are unceasing, and whose resources are vast.

There are three causes which, in my opinion, have brought about the present state of affairs in Ireland, anything more distressing than which it is impossible to conceive. The moment the people of Ireland are suffering they have remedies announced to them which amount in fact to the acquisition of the property of their neighbours, and they are bid to seize that property at once. The country is no longer safe when doctrines of that kind are taught and when no man is allowed to protect his property by lawful process without peril to his life. It is when the greed for the acquisition of property attains its present dimensions in Ireland that the foreigner appears and preaches the doctrine of assassination, of confiscation, and of the explosive patriotism of dynamite. If that be the state of things in Ireland at the present moment, I cannot doubt the propriety of the course which Her Majesty's Government are now pursuing, and the wisdom of the measure which they have introduced to our notice. I can only regret that so long a time elapsed before Her Majesty's Government proposed a measure of this character to Parliament, and that such a long time has been wasted in another place in passing it before it reached your lordships' House. I am confident that your lordships in supporting this Bill are supporting a measure which will command the sympathy of all loyal subjects of Her Majesty. I believe in its efficacy, and I hope that its provisions will be tempered by moderation and by mercy. I hope, however, that the powers it confers will not be too hastily withdrawn. I am in hopes that, with the material condition of Ireland improved by Providence, which I think we have a right to count upon,

with a continuance of the good harvests which have already commenced, the country will return to that condition of common sense which is absolutely necessary for good government, and that when that position is attained we may find the country flourishing and contented without being coerced.

PART IV.

PARTY SPEECHES AND GENERAL POLITICS.

THE LABOURS OF THE SESSION	AUG. 30, 1848.
BANQUET AT SLOUGH TO MEMBERS FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	MAY 27, 1858.
SPEECH AT EDINBURGH ON REFORM BILL	OCT. 29, 1867.
CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES (MANCHESTER)	APRIL 3, 1872.
THE NATIONAL AND COSMOPOLITAN PARTIES (CRYSTAL PALACE)	JUNE 24, 1872.
EXPLANATION IN HOUSE OF COMMONS .	MARCH 20, 1873.



THE LABOURS OF THE SESSION, August 30, 1848.

[The disorganisation of Parties was at this time complete. The weakness of the Government was equally conspicuous : and the consequence was that very little business was transacted. Sir Charles Wood and his four budgets were long memorable. Mr. Disraeli's opening remarks on the conduct of public business will be found very interesting at the present moment ; but this particular speech enjoys a special and superlative distinction above all its fellows : as I am authorised to state that, in Mr. Disraeli's own opinion, it made him leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons.]

MR. SPEAKER,—I take this occasion, as being perhaps the most convenient to the House, to make some observations on the conduct of public business during this session. I think there are reasons which render it not inexpedient that the House should not be prorogued without offering some opinion on that subject. Whatever be the merits or demerits of this session of Parliament, there is no doubt that it possesses by general consent one characteristic—that of having been a session of unexampled duration. There is, however, a suspicion very prevalent that its efficacy has not been commensurate with the period of its existence. It is said that after having sat now for nearly ten months, after having laboured with a zeal and an assiduity which have not been questioned, Parliament is about to be prorogued with a vast number of projects of legislation of great interest and value not passed, and many of them little advanced.

Why, Sir, the very subjects recommended to our consideration in the Speech from the Throne have not even been dealt with by the House in the way contemplated when we first met. There is more than one reason generally offered to account for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, for an unsatisfactory state of affairs I am sure every gentleman will agree it

really is, because it amounts to the acknowledgment, if it be true, of a very great public evil—namely, that our system of government is inadequate to pass those measures that are required for the public welfare. One of the most popular causes which is assigned for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, and for the existence of this great evil, is that there is too much discussion in the House of Commons, too many speeches, too much talk. This is an imputation which has been heard before this session of Parliament. It was not so rife, but yet it was an accusation prevalent during the last session of the last Parliament. I think it was urged as an obstacle to the conduct of public business by the members of the Manchester school, and this year it has been brought forward by their distinguished leader in the most formal and precise manner. That honourable gentleman, the member for the West Riding,¹ has even acknowledged to the House that, so far as he is concerned, he is so sensible of the evil of prolonged discussions in the House of Commons that he would consent, although opposed to all tariffs, to a sort of rhetorical tariff; and that for his part (and he spoke, I suppose, also for his friends) he has no objection that the time allotted to him for addressing the House should be settled by a standing order.

This is evidently a popular idea, and it may be (but we shall have opportunities of discussing that point) a very good suggestion; but I would remind the House that it is only very recently that this inconvenience of too much discussion has been experienced by the honourable gentleman and the other members of his school. There certainly was a time (not very distant, but a few years ago) when I do not think the honourable member for the West Riding would have been satisfied with a limited period of time being fixed by the House of Commons for the addresses of honourable members. I have listened to a great many able addresses from the honourable member for the West Riding and his friends, most of which exceeded that period of time, which he wishes now to establish; and, far from thinking then that there was too much discussion, they were not satisfied with the House of Commons

alone, but they built halls, and hired theatres, thinking that the House of Commons did not afford sufficient opportunities for the discussion of those great questions, and for the advancement of those great principles, which they wished to impress on public conviction.

There is another cause alleged for the unsatisfactory state of public business, and that is the forms of this House—the constitution of this House—which are now discovered to be cumbersome and antiquated, and to offer a great obstacle and barrier to the efficient, satisfactory, and speedy transaction of public affairs. This is the view of the case which is, I believe, principally relied on by Her Majesty's Government. Her Majesty's Government have on several occasions objected to, or rather deplored, the use of the forms of the House, of which honourable members have availed themselves; and towards the close of this dying session, with the sanction certainly, not to say the instigation, of Her Majesty's Government, a committee was appointed to inquire into the conduct of public business of which I was an humble member, and before which you, Sir, were a distinguished witness.

From the appointment of that committee it is clear that the Government did consider that in the forms of the House might be found the cause of that unsatisfactory state of affairs which we all lament. At the same time it is clear Her Majesty's Government by no means waived their acceptance of the other cause alleged by the honourable member for the West Riding and his friends. The noble lord opposite and the other members of Her Majesty's Government, have, on several occasions, deprecated that propensity to discussion which they have considered to form an obstacle to the transaction of public business. They have often told the House that, if honourable members would not make speeches and inquire into the merits of measures, unquestionably those measures would pass with greater promptitude; and though I look on Her Majesty's Ministers generally as the representatives of the second cause alleged for the evil we all acknowledge—namely, cumbersome and antiquated forms of the House—still they may be considered as having accepted and acknowledged the justice of the other cause

brought forward by the honourable member for the West Riding and his friends—namely, the propensity to over-discussion—too much talk and the consequent waste of time occasioning the delay of public business. I think I have stated the case fairly. I would fix on Her Majesty's Ministers having themselves admitted these two causes as the real ones of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, particularly as I observe in an official paper a paragraph which seems to ratify the truth of my statement.

Lord John Russell. Is it the 'London Gazette'?

No, it is not the 'London Gazette,' but I will show to the House that it is a paper to which are entrusted Government secrets far more interesting and more important than ever appear in the 'London Gazette.' I copied this official paragraph from what I consider, and I suppose Her Majesty's Ministers would consider, the only official journal of the Government—a journal which circulates all the secrets of the cabinet the moment they are known, which announces all the Government appointments from that of an ambassador to the French Republic to that of the last gauger of Excise. On last Sunday week I read in that journal the following official announcement, which proves that Her Majesty's Ministers, although they have by the appointment of the committee I have mentioned shown themselves to be of opinion that the forms of the House constitute one of the causes of the evil, all believe that the view taken by the honourable member for the West Riding is also just. The paragraph begins—'We have authority to state'—if this is a forgery, it is, of course, competent to the Treasury bench to contradict the statement—'We have authority to state that the fish dinner which was fixed for the 19th is postponed till the 26th. This postponement is occasioned by the vexatious discussions in the House of Commons. This man for talk has now reached such a pitch that something must really be done to arrest the evil. We have, however, authority to state that the fish dinner will positively take place on the 26th.' Saturday, then, was the dinner of the session, and Wednesday the discussion. How

ever, it is quite clear from that paragraph, allowing for all that irritability which is of course natural to men who lose their dinner, it is quite clear that the real feeling of the Government is, that there is too much discussion in this House. And I, for one, value slight means for obtaining truth like this more than I would any formal announcement even of the noble lord opposite; because it is always at those accidental movements, when men are thrown off their balance—little ebullitions of temper so natural, for instance, on the loss of a dinner—that you are enabled to detect the secret passion and the master feeling of the soul; and though the noble lord has talked a great deal of the forms of the House, alluding in a way more delicate than the honourable member for the West Riding to the propensity to discussion, it is quite clear that the Government are of opinion that the reason why the business of the country cannot be satisfactorily carried on, is, that there is too much discussion in the House of Commons. I therefore propose, in a manner the most brief and condensed I can command, to discuss whether these two causes are the real causes of the evil which exists, whether it is to be imputed to discussion in this House or to the forms of the Legislature that, after having sat nearly ten months, we have done very little, and that very little not very well.

But before I enter into that inquiry, perhaps it would not be uninteresting to the House, and to the country, that I should state what, independent of our debates, this House of Commons, which it is the fashion to blame at present, has really done; and in doing so I will refer to a short paragraph in the report of the committee on public business, which, though already laid on the table of the House, has accidentally not been circulated among members. It appears from that report that there have been this year forty-five public committees, some of more than usual importance, with an average number of fifteen members serving on each committee. Then there have been twenty-eight election committees, with five members serving on each committee; fourteen groups on Railway Bills, with five members on each group; seventeen groups on private Bills, with five members on each group; and there have been

also one hundred and eleven other committees on private business. Of the public committees, that on commercial distress sat thirty-nine days, that on sugar and coffee planting, thirty-nine days, that on the navy, army, and ordnance expenditure, thirty-seven days. There have, besides, been presented this year upwards of 18,500 petitions, showing an increase of twenty-five per cent above the greatest number presented in any former year, except 1843.

Here I would make one observation on these petitions, since considerable error exists out of doors among our constituents on this subject. There is an idea that the presentation of a petition is an empty form—that it is ordered to lie on the table, and is never heard of again. Now, it is as well that our constituents should know that every petition laid on the table is scrutinised by a select committee of the most experienced and influential members of this House—that every petition which, from the importance of its subject or the ability of its statements, appears to merit more particular notice, is printed at the public cost and afterwards circulated among the members, and I believe that at this moment the right of petition (although it is not permitted to make speeches on every petition) is a more important and efficient right than has ever been enjoyed at any time by the people of England in this respect.

Having, therefore, fairly, I hope, stated the causes to which is imputed the great evil we all acknowledge—namely, the apparent inefficiency of our system of government for the transaction of business necessary to the welfare of the State—I shall proceed to see whether those causes are founded in justice; and if they are not, whether it is possible, before the Parliament is prorogued, to ascertain what the real cause is. It would be, perhaps, convenient to recall to the House the circumstances under which this Parliament met. Such extraordinary circumstances have occurred since February, that we are apt to forget, while reflecting on the fall of thrones, the uprooting of dynasties, the toppling down of great ministers whose reputations had become almost part of history, and who for more than half a century had moulded the government—*one might almost say, of civilised Europe*—I repeat, that while these catastrophes

are fresh in our memory, we are apt to forget (so long have been the duration and so eventful the period of this session) the circumstances under which the present Parliament met.

Honourable gentlemen should recollect that when this first session of the new Parliament of the Queen assembled, we were then suffering from events which, though not of a reputation so European, nor of a character so comprehensive as those I have just referred to, yet, as far as we were concerned, were not less strange and far more sad. The inscrutable and omnipotent decree had gone forth and stricken one of the Queen's kingdoms with famine, and the great efforts obliged to be made by the merchants of this country in consequence of that terrible visitation led—in addition no doubt to other causes—to a commercial crisis, perhaps of unprecedented severity. There were uprootings of commercial dynasties in England not less striking than the fall of those political houses of which we have lately heard so much. Day after day, gentlemen with whom we had lived in this house and whom we respected and regarded—merchants of the highest European reputation—were during that crisis rudely torn, I may say, from these benches, if not with disgrace and dishonour, yet with circumstances of pitiable vicissitude seldom equalled. When Parliament met there was this commercial distress of unprecedented severity—private credit was paralysed—trade was more than dull, it was almost dead—and there scarcely was a private individual in this kingdom, from the richest and noblest down to the most humble among the middle classes, who was not smarting under the circumstances of that commercial distress, which was of a nature so severe and striking, that it was one of the main causes alleged for calling the Parliament together in November. Her Majesty stated the reasons which induced her to call the Parliament together then, and she was pleased to say that she 'had seen with great concern the distress which has for some time prevailed among the commercial classes;' and Her Majesty enlarged on that subject in terms which I will not now quote at length, as every gentleman is acquainted with them. But let me ask the House whether, on that

subject of commercial distress, there was, when the House met, too much discussion?

When the House is charged with having such a propensity for making speeches, let me recall to the recollection of honourable gentlemen, that the impression of the entire country, after we had met, was, that we had been called together by the Sovereign upon the occasion of a great exigency—upon an acknowledged specific case of universal interest—and that on that subject the House of Commons had said nothing. There was, I believe, a feeling of blank discomfiture pervading all classes—pervading all parties—in the country and in towns—because when Parliament met, it did not immediately give to the causes of that commercial distress, by which the country had been stricken so severely, the advantages of a public discussion, which might have arbitrated between the contending theories and conflicting reasons, and arrived at some results which would have been a fair guide to public intelligence.

There was, however, no discussion whatever on that subject. Of course I do not mean to deny that when the House met there was, upon the motion for the address, a desultory discussion for a couple of nights, in the course of which the commercial distress and monetary crisis formed two important elements. But we know that Parliament never meets without such desultory discussion, and no one ever heard an opening discussion in a new Parliament which was not general, and usually adjourned. In the present instance it was insignificant, because there was a general understanding that the question was too vast to be encountered in that incidental manner, and it was supposed that the first business of the House would be a prolonged and complete discussion on that great subject; for let me recall to the recollection of the House the language of the Sovereign on the opening of Parliament.¹ It was as follows:—“The embarrassments of trade were at one period aggravated by so general a feeling of distrust and alarm that Her Majesty, for the purpose of restoring confidence, authorised her ministers² to recommend to the directors of the Bank of England a

¹ Parliament met in November 1847.

² On October 25, 1847, the Government addressed a letter to the directors

course of proceeding suited to such an emergency. This course might have led to an infringement of the law.'

Now, I ask whether on this great subject, in respect to which we were justified in expecting there would be most ample and complete discussion, the House of Commons has shown too great a propensity to debate? I shall be told, no doubt, that though I have referred merely to a desultory discussion on the motion for the address, with respect to the commercial distress, and especially as to the conduct of the Government in regard to the advice given to the directors of the Bank of England, still, the right honourable gentleman the member for Stamford¹ did, on a subsequent occasion, bring the question formally before the House. That is very true, but in the first place I should think there are few who would maintain that there was any abuse of the privileges of Parliament when such a man on such a subject appealed to the House of Commons. I should say that, considering the experience of my right honourable friend—the turn of his mind, the bent of his studies—it would have been satisfactory to the country, to men of all parties, that he of all persons should have originated an investigation of the subject the management and constitution of the Bank of England, and the conduct of Her Majesty's ministers during the crisis.

But I do not suppose that that motion of my right honourable friend will be alleged to have been of an intrusive or impertinent nature. I do not suppose that the night occupied by that discussion will be represented, like other nights, as a waste of time. If so, I would remind the House that we had not the alternative of silence in that respect, for Her Majesty's ministers had announced, through the highest medium, that they had counselled the directors of the Bank of England to infringe the law. True it is that, in the same royal speech, they intimated that that infringement, notwithstanding their permission, did not take place; but my right honourable friend, and those gentlemen on this side of the House with whom he acts, could not agree that the criminality of an offence only of the Bank of England recommending them to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances on approved securities, and to raise the rate of interest to eight per cent.

¹ Right Hon. J. C. Herries.

consists in perpetration and action. We hold that the intention is just as guilty as the perpetration—that a man who tries to commit a murder is as guilty as a man who has actually committed a murder—and that, therefore, if a minister counsels a public body to infringe the law, although the infringement may not take place, it is a case in which Parliament ought to come forward constitutionally to indemnify the minister if it approves of his counsel.

These were our opinions, but I am not clear that they would have been forced upon the House had it not been for the ostentatious manner in which the Government announced in the Queen's Speech their counselling the infringement of the law, and in which they led the House to understand that it was their opinion, as such infringement of the law had not taken place, that they required no indemnity. I think myself that the whole conduct of the Government with respect to that letter was so weak and whimsical that it is difficult to account for it except by supposing that they were—as naturally they may have been—in a state of very great perplexity. Why they should have been so long before they counselled the infringement of the law—why, when they had done so, they should have been so delighted that the Bank did not avail itself of the privilege—and why, having done all this, which amounts to nothing, they should have written the paragraph in the Queen's Speech to which I have referred, completely puzzles me.

I scarcely know to what to compare their conduct, except to something that occurs in a delightful city of the south, with which honourable gentlemen are familiar—and which is now I believe blockaded or bullied by the English fleet. There an annual ceremony takes place, when the whole population are found in a state of the greatest alarm and sorrow. A procession moves through the streets, in which the blood of a saint is carried in a consecrated vase. The people throng around the vase, and there is a great pressure—as there was in London at the time to which I was alluding. This pressure in time becomes a panic—just as it did in London. It is curious that in both cases the cause is the same: it is a cause of congested circulation. Just at the moment when unutterable gloom

overspreads the population, when nothing but despair and consternation prevail, the Chancellor of the Exchequer—I beg pardon—the Archbishop of Tarento announces the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the issue of a Government letter: in both instances a wholesome state of currency returns, the people resume their gaiety and cheerfulness, the panic and the pressure disappear, everybody returns to music and macaroni—as in London everybody returned to business; and in both cases the remedy is equally efficient and equally a hoax.

I think there is some reason for the House to agree with me that, as far as this great question of commercial distress (which the honourable member for Warwickshire is well aware has not yet terminated) is concerned, the House of Commons has not wasted much time. This is the most important subject which could possibly interest a great commercial nation; and yet I believe there are not a dozen members in the House who have expressed their opinions upon it. I confess that, as far as our discussions upon banking are concerned, I have long relinquished any hope that their result would be as satisfactory as I could desire. I observe that, by the adroit tactics of a great master of Parliamentary stratagem, a combat always takes place between opposite opinions, with which those who originate the question have generally very little to do. The debate is always interesting—it is frequently entertaining—but the sound principles of banking are seldom advanced by such discussions; and to obtain that great end I confess I look forward to only one means, and that a very painful one—another pressure and another panic.

I will now, Sir, refer to a subject of the utmost possible importance—the financial question; and I will ask the House, now on August 30, after sitting for nearly ten months, calmly to consider whether, with regard to the financial statements and the measures which result from those statements, the conduct of the House of Commons has been of the thoughtless, unbusiness-like, unsatisfactory character which is alleged? I ask the House to inquire how much time has been occupied during the present session by those financial communications and arrange-

ments which it is the first duty of an English minister to submit to the House of Commons? I ask the House to inquire whether, if time has been wasted, it has been wasted by the House of Commons—whether the speeches of honourable members on the forms of the House have occasioned such an expenditure of the public time? On February 18th the financial statement was made to this House. It was exceedingly satisfactory, both to the House and to the country, to be told that when Parliament met after Christmas not an hour would be unnecessarily lost before the financial statement was made. There was a disposition on this side of the House to view the conduct of the Government with forbearance, and I believe, indeed, they were in some degree favourites out of doors. People said, to be sure they are not men of business, but they have hard times. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is a most active man. True, he got wrong in his deficiency bill, but that was an exceptional case. The Government are now sailing in still water, and they meet public business like men. When Parliament meets, not a moment is to be lost, the Prime Minister will be prepared, and we are to have the budget early in February.

Well, Sir, notwithstanding all the great events which have occurred in Europe, I still recollect that budget. It was communicated to the House quite in a grand style. It was not entrusted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Tamworth itself could not have arranged a programme more magnificent and more solemn. The Prime Minister himself came forward. The considerations included, in a political sense, were not less important than those of a financial nature. It was clearly a budget that could not be entrusted to a mere man of routine—it demanded the expansive views and the high spirit of a statesman. The country was to be defended as well as the taxes to be paid. These were great questions for the House to consider, and when we were informed of our danger—when we were induced to express our determination to protect our country, our sovereign, and our hearths—when we found there was to be an increase not only of the miscellaneous but of the military estimates—then the great sting in the epigram was apparent,

and we were told the income-tax was to be doubled. Now that was clearly a financial scheme which must have been most completely matured. It was not a scheme that was taken up in an hour, or drawn with a pen on the back of a letter. There must have been cabinet councils frequent and long, discussions secret and interminable, upon a budget which—in a moment of deficiency—required the country to increase its expenditure, and which attempted to accomplish two great ends—to defend the country and to fill the exchequer.

I think, Sir, I am using no term of exaggeration if I express the feeling of the House, after hearing that budget, as one of considerable dissatisfaction. Every honourable gentleman who represented a party or a section, rose—almost even behind the Treasury bench—and expressed an indignant protest against the Government scheme. But this was only a murmur compared with the roar which took place out of doors. A menagerie before feeding time could alone give an idea of the unearthly yell with which the middle classes—especially the inhabitants of towns, especially the advocates of Liberal opinions, and more especially the disciples of free trade principles, met this demand. Day after day, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Bradford sent up their protests; meetings were held in the City of London, at which the scheme was condemned; and persons were, in fact, so much alarmed that they had not time to investigate the causes of their condition, but there was a general impression that the income tax was about to be doubled, because we were going to war.

Well, on February 21st (the Monday following the Friday on which the announcement was made), there having been several cabinet councils in the interval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was put forward—just as a great general, after arranging the disposition of his infantry, finding they cannot do all he expected, sends out a dashing commander of cavalry to make a charge which he hopes will set things right—and made a most extraordinary speech. It was a sort of lament over the misconceptions which had unaccountably occurred with regard to the statements of his chief. One would imagine that if there were any Parliamentary statement, any public narrative, which

would be carefully and clearly prepared before it was submitted to this House it would be a financial exposition. I had listened to the exposition, charmed by the classic eloquence of the noble lord, and I certainly was not aware that it was enveloped in that Theban mist by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that it was encompassed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the man to put a thing right. He came forward and said, that the greatest possible misconception existed as to the estimates—but that it was not a very great increase, and that it was occasioned by an expedition to the North Pole. This was the declaration of the right honourable gentleman to show that we were not going to war, but that we were merely endeavouring to discover the North Pole—a luxury, I think, better adapted to times when we possessed a surplus in the Exchequer.

Then the right honourable gentleman acknowledged that it was true the miscellaneous estimates were considerably increased; 'but,' he said, 'you forget the expense of building the new Houses of Parliament, of keeping up the British Museum, and, last of all, the immensely increased amount of your printers' bill.' That was the defence of the estimates made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—a defence which heralded the most extraordinary proposition ever made by a minister. To the surprise, very probably, not of the members of the cabinet, but I am sure of every member of the Administration who was not in the cabinet, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his determination to propose the immediate reference of the army, navy, and ordnance estimates to a select committee; and on the next day he also proposed that the miscellaneous estimates should be submitted to the same ordeal. But, Sir, the storm did not lull. Submitting the estimates to select committees—a point on which, with the permission of the House, I shall afterwards make some observations—did not pay the double income tax; and there were symptoms of popular feeling which also might have led to the supposition that the tumults which afterwards broke out in various parts of the Continent were about to commence in this loyal country of England.

Well, on February 28th the honourable member for Montrose

(Mr. Hume), having given notice of a motion for the reduction of expenditure and the diminution of taxation, and there being also some other very inconvenient notices upon the books—on February 28th, ten days after the financial exposition of the noble lord at the head of the Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer came down to the House, and, in the handsomest manner—keeping his promise to the House and to the public that they should have a budget in February—presented them with *two budgets*! On that occasion the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that misconceptions as to the intentions of the ministry not only still continued to prevail, but were even on the increase; that there were already several motions of a most inconvenient character on the books of the House; that it became necessary to review their position; that he had himself no doubt that the estimates might be considerably curtailed; that by borrowing money which had been destined for another purpose, and by not applying some money to the purpose for which it was originally intended—that is to say, by filching on the one hand and screwing on the other—they could manage very well to bring the expenditure and the income to a balance without doubling the income tax—an income tax which the noble lord had estimated would bring an additional 3,500,000*l.* into the Exchequer.

Now, let me remind the House that, from February 18th to 28th, ten days were wasted in this House while the country was kept in a state of agitation; but was it the House of Commons that was guilty of wasting that time? Was there too much discussion here, or were the antiquated forms of the House tripping up the noble lord and the cabinet? Ten days were wasted, and we had not advanced a step. On February 28th we were still with an empty Exchequer, and the only chance we had of getting anything to pay even 10*s.* in the pound of the deficiency was by scraping some 600,000*l.*, 700,000*l.*, or 800,000*l.* from the estimates, which had just been laid on the table with this announcement: ‘Gentlemen of the House of Commons,—Her Majesty has given directions that the estimates of the next year should be prepared for the purpose of being laid before you. They will be framed with a careful regard to

the exigencies of the public service' We had a deficient revenue, yet, with this statement on the table of the House the Chancellor of the Exchequer found that the estimates had not been prepared with a careful regard to the exigencies of the public service

Not to enter into a dry chronological account of all the sayings and doings of the past eventful ten months, I will pursue the financial subject to the end, that this House and the country may clearly understand what time has been wasted, in respect of the exposition management of the public finances

On June 30, appropriate to nothing before the House, in the midst of a colonial debate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having reason, as he supposed, to answer an honourable gentleman on the opposite benches who had made a speech of considerable ability and intelligence, suddenly and in the most impromptu manner threw his *third budget* on the table of the House Now, what occurred on that occasion? I am not now going into the details of the sugar debates, to which I shall have to advert afterwards—I am keeping merely to the point of our finances The right honourable member for Manchester and the honourable member for the West Riding proposed the adjournment of the debate upon the Bill then before the House, on the ground that instead of discussing the great principle of which they were the champions—instead of debating the propriety of altering the law of 1846 with reference to sugar—the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by introducing his new budget, entirely diverted the attention of the House from the subject before them, and the discussion which took place was upon the financial state of the country That debate, which lasted for two days, instead of being a debate on the sugar question, was a discussion of the third budget of the ministry

I should have remarked that in the month of February, when the first financial statement was made, my noble friend, the member for King's Lynn (Lord George Bentinck), asked whether the Government had included the corn duties in their calculations They answered that they had not done so, but in the third budget—the budget of June—it was discovered that they had included the corn duties

We had, then, three budgets during the period in which I have traced the affairs of the session, commencing with February 18th and coming down to June 30th, yet we had not advanced a jot. Not a gentleman in this House took advantage of such an extraordinary state of affairs to originate a single inquiry into the condition of the national finances. The Government were let alone, they were treated with the greatest forbearance and indulgence; yet from February 18 to June 30 they had not in the slightest degree redeemed their promise to the House and to the country. All they had done was what, certainly, no ministers had ever done before; they had produced three financial projects, all of which were inefficient.

Now, let us see what other portion of time was wasted under the system pursued by the Government. All this time your estimates were submitted to select committees upstairs, and the committee of supply in this House was virtually shut. The Government could obtain nothing but a vote on confidence, to pay wages or dividends. When the select committees were appointed, I took occasion, at the request and with the sanction of the gentlemen with whom I act in political connection, to state the objections we entertained to submitting the estimates to committees upstairs. I showed in the first place that it was an unconstitutional course as regards the sovereign, that, notwithstanding the very pompous announcement of precedents by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, his precedents availed nothing in the instance in question—that they were all precedents of finance committees for legitimate inquiries into the expenditure and revenue of the country—and that there was no precedent whatever for submitting estimates which had been prepared by the ministers on their responsibility to committees upstairs, thus shifting the responsibility from the ministry to the committees. I showed that these were, in fact, select committees of supply, and that if you had select committees of supply, you might with equal justice have a select committee of ways and means—that, if a select committee was to prepare estimates, there was not the slightest reason why, by analogy, a select committee might not inflict the taxation, and that the double income-tax might have been settled by a committee of ways.

and means upstairs, as the estimates were revised by a committee of supply upstairs.

I stated some further objections with reference to the appointment of these committees. I said that the course was unconstitutional as regarded members of this House, because it deprived them of the constitutional privilege to which every member is entitled, and of which almost every gentleman in this House avails himself, of investigating in committee the justice of these estimates, and expressing his opinion on subjects which may be interesting to himself and his constituents. The noble lord (Lord John Russell) who did me the honour of answering me, said it was a perfect delusion to suppose that, because the estimates were referred to committees upstairs, honourable gentlemen would, therefore, be deprived of their constitutional privilege of criticism in committee of the whole House, and he said that, when the estimates came down from the committees, all the six hundred and fifty-eight members would have an opportunity of exercising that constitutional privilege. It so happened, however, that the estimates did not come down till August, when four-fifths of the members of this House were absent; and practically, every member has been deprived, in this important year, of his constitutional privilege, by the manner in which the financial affairs of the country have been administered by the Government.

But independently of this, Her Majesty's ministers, by the course they have taken, have protracted the session, and have deferred the consideration of the estimates in committee of supply, three months beyond the usual period. Why, after your three budgets and your two committees upon the estimates the estimates were barely passed by the end of August; and I ask with confidence whether, as far as the administration of that great department of public business is concerned, this House has been guilty of the waste of a single hour with respect to the question of finance? We had three budgets, two committees, and six months and a half wasted by this administration; these men of business, who were to give us a satisfactory financial exposition early in February; and the Prime Minister,

with that almost sublime coolness which characterises him, announced late in July that his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would take an opportunity before the House separated of making another financial statement.

Well, Sir, we had at last the *fourth budget*. We had, some time ago, the government of all the talents. This is the government of all the budgets. Alas! for this fourth budget! It came late, and at a moment when we wanted glad tidings; but, unfortunately it was not characterised by the sunny aspect which was desirable. I shall never forget the scene. It was a dreary moment. There was a very thin House, the thinnest, I suppose, that ever attended a ceremony so interesting to every country, and especially to a commercial and financial one like England. I never saw a budget brought forward before an attendance so gloomy and so small. No; I shall never forget the scene. It irresistibly reminded me of a celebrated character who, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had four trials in his time, and whose last was the most unsuccessful—I mean the great hero of Cervantes, when he returned from his fourth and final expedition. The great spirit of Quixote had subsided, all that sally of financial chivalry which cut us down at the beginning of the session, and which trampled and cantered over us in the middle, was gone. Honourable gentlemen will remember the chapter to which I refer, which describes the period when the knight's illusions were fast being dispelled, and when losing his faith in chivalry, he returned home crest-fallen and weary.

The villagers, like the Opposition, were drawn out to receive him, and Cervantes tells us that, although they were aware of his weakness, they treated him with respect. His immediate friends the barber, the curate, the bachelor Sampson Carrasco, whose places might be supplied in this House by the First Lord of the Treasury,¹ the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,² and, perhaps, the President of the Board of Trade,³ were assembled, and with demure reverence and feigned sympathy they greeted him, broken in spirit, and about forever to renounce those delightful illusions under which he had

¹ Lord J. Russell.

² Lord Palmerston.

³ Mr. Labouchere.

sallied forth so triumphantly, but, just at the moment when everything, though melancholy, was becoming, though sad, was in the best taste, Sancho's wife moves forward and exclaims, 'Never mind your kicks and cuffs, so you've brought home some money' But this is just the thing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not brought. Such was the end of the fourth and final expedition, and such is the result of the fourth and final budget. The Chancellor of the Exchequer during the whole session has been bringing home barbers' basins, instead of knightly helmets, and at the last moment, true to his nature, to his vocation, and to his career, he finds instead of a surplus a deficiency, and, instead of reducing taxation, he commemorates his second year of finance by a second loan.

Now, I ask honourable gentlemen to cast their eyes over the period I have sketched, from February 18 to August 25, over the three budgets, the unconstitutional committees on the estimates, and the fourth and final budget, and then I ask the House and the country with confidence for their verdict, that whatever time has been wasted, whatever delay has taken place, has not been attributable to the discussions of members or to the forms of the House.

Her Majesty, in her speech, had been pleased to recommend two most important subjects to our consideration in order that we might legislate upon them, and it is with very great regret that I find, on reviewing the business of the session, that we have not complied entirely with Her Majesty's commands. That, at the first sight, is, I confess, an apparent stain upon the loyalty of her faithful Commons, and I shall now proceed, in as condensed a manner as possible, to see whether we are really guilty of that deficiency in our allegiance—whether it is our fault that we have not obeyed Her Majesty's commands in these two respects—first, in passing measures for improving the health of the metropolis, and also the public health, and secondly, in adopting a measure with respect to the laws which regulate the navigation of the United Kingdom.

Now with regard to the first of these measures a sanitary law has been passed. The Bill was introduced on February 10th, and it was ordered to be printed, as amended by the Lords, on

July 27th, five months afterwards. One can hardly conceive that five months can have been wasted upon a Bill which, I suppose, was a very matured measure, and which was rather pushed by the Government without there having been very vexatious opposition or prolix and unnecessary discussion on the part of the House of Commons; but without official statistics, such an opinion might be precipitate. Now what was the form in which this measure, which has since become law, was first introduced? It was 'A Bill for Promoting the Public Health,' which we ordered to be printed on February 10th, 1848, price 8*d*. It came before us again as a Bill, as amended by the Committee for Promoting Public Health, and it was ordered to be printed on March 13th: the ordeal could not then have been too severe. We had then another Bill—another edition rather—called 'A Bill, as amended by the Committee, and on recommitment, for Promoting the Public Health, ordered to be printed on May 15th,' but the price had increased to 10*d*. That is significant that the 'project of the law' was much more ample in size than when it was first introduced. We had a fourth edition: 'Clauses proposed to be amended' were sent round on May 15th. Then there was another edition: 'A Bill, as amended by the Committee, on recommitment, on second recommitment, and on third recommitment, for Promoting the Public Health, ordered to be printed May 25, price 10*d*.' At last we come to 'A Bill, as amended by the Lords, entitled An Act for Promoting the Public Health, ordered to be printed July 27, price 1*s*.' The size of the measure bears an exact relation to the price; and, inasmuch as 8*d*. became 1*s*., so the number of clauses and provisoes that were on every stage recommended to our consideration equally increased.

Now when we remember that on these various occasions, besides whole batches of clauses and new provisoes, there were endless alterations in the old ones—that the general board itself, which was the essence of the whole thing, was changed during these discussions in its constitution, in the number of its members, in the nature of its functions and prerogatives—that it was once to have been a quinquumvirate with two paid members, then it was to have been an unpaid trium-

virate, then a triumvirate with one proud member—that there is scarcely a function or a duty connected with the public health which has not been changed, transposed, and altered, during those five months of discussion—it is quite clear that this Bill was in a state which rendered a discussion in this House most profitable, that it was one of those instances in which Parliamentary criticism was not only a first duty but a public benefit, and I do not think that anybody can remember the labours of many gentlemen sitting on this side of the House, and especially my honourable friend, the member for Oxfordshire (Mr Henley), in that respect, without feeling that an appeal to that legislation is precisely the instance which might be selected to prove the efficient services of the House of Commons.

At the same time I am perfectly willing to admit—I admit it with perfect sincerity—that if any other member of the Administration but one who combined such fine talents and such an amiable disposition as the minister who had undertaken the management of the measure, had undertaken it, I doubt whether it would have advanced to the ultimate goal, and I am sure that he had frequent occasions during those discussions, to show those qualities which have rendered him so deservedly one of the most popular men in this House and in this country. I think, however, the House will agree with me that no one will pretend that the manner in which the sanitary law was passed can be the foundation of any charge against the House of Commons.

Let us see now whether we are the guilty occasion of the navigation laws not having been repealed. Now, I do not enter at all, on the present occasion, or as little as possible, into the policy of measures of course, as far as we on the benches are concerned, we are very glad that the navigation laws are not repealed, though, equally of course, we should never have offered any fictitious or vexatious opposition to the Government in that respect, but I am merely looking now to the instance of the navigation laws with reference to the conduct of public business. I find in a return appended to the Report on Public Business that the proposition respecting the

navigation laws—a subject the importance of which cannot be magnified, specially noticed and specially commended to our consideration in Her Majesty's speech—was introduced into this House on May 15. There were then two nights' discussion on the proposition, and subsequently there were four nights' discussion, ending on June 9; and excepting the formal introduction of the Bill afterwards, that is all the time that has been expended in discussing one of the most important alterations that probably any minister, it will be admitted by all, could propose in Parliament and especially in this country.

Now, I ask the House, were six nights' discussion too much with respect to a proposition of a nature so remarkable—I will not say so impolitic—I will not enter into the policy—but I say of a nature so vast and comprehensive? I hold that we should have been acting with much want of consideration for our constituents, and for the country generally, had we not addressed ourselves to that great argument in a proper and ample spirit. My recollection of that debate is, that it was conducted with great talent on both sides, great knowledge, and great ability—that it was, on the whole, one of those debates of the session that gave satisfaction to the country. Considering the nature of the subject—considering how the proposition was regarded, justly or not, as one that might affect the very springs and sources of our maritime supremacy—is it to be for a moment pretended that this was a matter on which, for the sake of saving public time, the House of Commons were to relinquish their high office of debate? No, Sir, I do not suppose that the noble lord will allege that our conduct with respect to the discussions of his proposal for the repeal of the navigation laws were at all of a vexatious or frivolous character. That is not one of the discussions that have forced the fish dinner to be postponed for a week.

But I have a charge against the Government, as far as the conduct of public business is concerned, for their not having carried the navigation laws. If the subject is of such urgent importance as to be the first recommended in the Queen's Speech, why was your project introduced so late as May 15? I will tell you why it was—because the noble lord when Parlia-

ment met chose to introduce a Bill, to which he devoted all the strength and energies of the Government, on a subject which was not introduced into Her Majesty's Speech—the Jewish Disabilities Bill. The noble lord knows full well that, as far as my opinions of that measure are concerned, I am making no imputation upon the noble lord for bringing it in. I gave to the noble lord, at no ordinary sacrifice, my support upon that occasion, but, though I agree with the noble lord as to the principle which animated his legislation, I do not at all approve of his conduct as manager of the House of Commons. My opinion is, generally speaking, that upon all subjects of that kind, the emancipation of the Catholics and the like, it is not advisable that a minister should bring forward a project of change unless he is able to carry his measure. I believe the evils are great of a minister failing in measures of that kind, the failure imparts a party spirit and a party bitterness to subjects in which party bitterness at all events, and party spirit as little as possible, should mingle. Besides, it is an imprudent and impolitic course with regard to those whose interests you advocate, because when the minister is defeated, the cause always goes back. It is known that the battle has been fought under the most favourable auspices, and you always find a reaction. It is very different if you are in Opposition. If the noble lord had been in Opposition he would have been perfectly justified, from his position, from the opinions upon religious disabilities which he has always most ably upheld, in bringing the subject before the House year after year, to see whether by fresh cogency of logic and increased brilliancy of rhetoric, he could make an advance in the House and in the country, and in fact to gauge the progress of the question. I think in the position of the First Minister of the Crown, he was not justified in bringing forward a measure of this kind unless he had a moral certainty of passing it. But it is quite clear that his bringing in the Jewish Disabilities Bill, and pressing it forward, prevented his carrying the repeal of the navigation laws, and, so far as his conduct of the business of the session was concerned, was a great mistake.

Perhaps I was in error when I said that pursuing the Jewish

Disabilities Bill was the sole cause of the repeal of the Navigation Laws not being carried, because I think I showed the House that the main discussion had taken place on June 9; and in a Parliament which sits to September there is no doubt that even on June 9 it was possible to carry the repeal of the navigation laws; there had been no waste of public time by the conduct of the great body of independent members of the House of Commons. The progress of this latter measure was arrested, I say, by the most remarkable circumstance of the session—an event which gave a totally different colour and changed character to the remaining months of our sitting—which altered the whole tenor of debate—which influenced, in fact, the financial statement of the minister, and which, in one shape or other has, from that time to the present, entirely engrossed our attention, and a great portion of that of the nation.

The House will recollect that, when Parliament met, our sugar-growing colonies were beginning to experience the effect of the measure of 1846, the first and most felicitous effort of Her Majesty's ministers. But who cares for the sugar colonies? Nobody attended to their complaints; they were recommended a little more competition—a little more energy—a little more enterprise—they were only to exert themselves and they would do in time. Nevertheless, packet after packet arrived with accounts more gloomy, details more disastrous, till at last the gloom blackened and the disaster assumed the aspect of despair. Fortunately for the sugar colonies there was one member of this House who, though not a minister or connected with ministers, has some influence; and what is more valuable, an intrepidity that cannot be daunted, and a perseverance that cannot be wearied. The noble lord (Lord G. Bentinck), the member for King's Lynn, disregarding any imputation of wasting the public time when he thought a public interest was at stake, determined to see whether it was not possible that, as long as we pretended to have a colonial empire, there should be at least some appearance of justice on the part of the Legislature to those colonies; whether if we would not relieve them, we would at least inquire into their condition, they alleging

that that condition was mainly, if not entirely, occasioned by our recent legislation

On February 4, Parliament having met again after the Christmas recess, my noble friend brought before the House the state of the West Indies, in moving for a committee. At first the Government would not grant a committee to inquire—at first, all that could have been done would have been to make a statement, or to move for a committee, and be defeated by the ready legions of the administration, but accounts had already arrived in the beginning of February, which made even Downing Street listen to the complaints of those distant islands, and we were informed in the quietest manner that a committee would be granted

(Lord John Russell ‘That was in December’)

Nothing is more painful to me than to make any misrepresentation—I thank the noble lord

(Lord John Russell ‘The committee was appointed in February, but I had agreed to it in December’)

The noble lord is quite right, I am much obliged to him. On February 4, when the committee was appointed, he stated that he would not alter his policy. The committee was nominated. It was little heeded at first. I believe for the first month, except those immediately connected with the colonies, hardly a person was interested about it, or aware of its being in deliberation. The committee was most impartially appointed—at least, as regards the opinions which my noble friend supports—for there was a preponderance of those who are favourers of the new commercial system. But, at last, after a month or six weeks, rumours of the labours of this committee and the results of those labours began to creep about, they were whispered in the House, you heard of them below the bar, despairing West Indians were found in the lobbies, they learned that there was a chance of succour—that such a case had been made out that men who had entered into the committee with preconceived opinions against them began to hesitate.

The labours of the committee or some members of it, I believe, were of unparalleled severity. We heard the other day of a gentleman who had been knighted because his labours had

lasted eighteen hours a day, he being also well paid for them. I think my noble friend said that he sometimes laboured eighteen hours a day. I can bear witness to it in reference to other occasions; and, though I was not a member of the West Indian Committee, I believe there were frequent instances during that inquiry in which he laboured eighteen hours a day. The report of this committee, of which I have already reminded the House in my narrative of the labours of the principal committees of the session—this committee appointed on February 4, and formed as to its majority of gentlemen favourable to liberal opinions in commerce—the report, made on May 29, recommended the maintenance of duties on a scale which would have given a differential duty of 10s. to the colonies. But on the same day, ‘Lord John Russell (I quote from a written record) proclaimed the firm determination of the Government to maintain the Sugar Duties Act of 1846;’ and the House will see that if the Government had remained firm in that determination, and if they had not indulged in useless discussion, they might have passed the repeal of the navigation laws.

The noble lord had declared on February 4th that he would not change the Act of 1846. The noble lord announced, on May 29th, the firm determination of the Government to adhere to the same Act. Between May 29th and June 1st—the period is not considerable—how many Cabinet Councils were held? Although I have made some researches for this condensed epitome of our life of ten months, I have not been able to ascertain; but on June 1st, the same Prime Minister, who was unalterable and firm on May 29th, came down to this House and volunteered a statement when we were approaching another and necessary relaxation, the Whitsun vacation, that on the 15th or 16th of that month, when we should meet again, some member of the Government would inform the House and country what the Government intended to do with the sugar colonies. On June 16th, the announcement of the Government measure was made; and, not to enter into details too familiar with most of us, and wearisome at this moment when I have already been obliged

to abuse your indulgence, I may say generally, of this project of the Government, that it was an absolute departure from the principle of the Act of 1846, to which we had been twice informed the Government was unalterably devoted

Why, Sir, does it not strike the Government—I think it must strike the House and strike the country—that if the Government had been less infirm of purpose in this respect—if they had not introduced all those discussions which for three months have engrossed our time—public business might have been advanced in a very different way from that in which I shall show that it has been. But the measure is brought forward. I do not enter into the various portions of the scheme, because I take it for granted that gentlemen and the public have them fairly in their minds—that it was, in fact, to establish for a period a differential duty in favour of the Colonies—that it also promised the advance of a large sum for purposes of immigration—that it proposed a change of the duty on rum—these and the other points are so familiar that I will not dwell upon them, and the more, because it is not my object to-day to enter at all into the policy of questions, and all that I want to do is to discover the causes why the public business of this country is not conducted in a satisfactory manner. Therefore I say, generally, the resolutions of the Government were brought forward, and were discussed by this House, the discussions upon these important resolutions took up ten days, considering the question at issue—considering that the principles of our colonial empire were, in fact, under discussion—considering also and never forgetting the *peculiar manner in which* the matter was brought under our notice—the suddenness of it, the apparent hesitation and caprice of the minister—it can hardly under these circumstances be said that ten days were an excessive time for the discussion of this great question.

But when I examine the details of that period of ten days, I find that nearly four were absorbed by two episodes which really had nothing to do with the great question before us. There was, first, the third budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which, on the authority of the honourable member for Manchester (Mr M Gibson), and the honourable member

for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden), absorbed two days; and there were also two absorbed by that incident which is known by the name of 'the missing dispatch'—what was styled in this House 'a petty personality'—but which I believe is pretty well recognised by the country to have been a great ministerial blunder. 'The missing dispatch' took two days. I do not want to go back into the details of 'the missing dispatch,' but still, at the last day of the session before the curtain falls, I cannot help remembering the missing dispatch, and some other dispatches which have not been placed upon this table. I cannot help expressing my regret that we live in such times, and have come to such a pass in England, that the state of our colonies is such that even the dispatch of a colonial governor cannot be safely placed upon the table of an English House of Commons. Ten days then upon the resolutions. I think I have shown that it is not the House of Commons that is responsible for the discussion upon the sugar question; the ten days of discussion were, in fact, only six upon the merits of the case—had they been sixteen, the merits of the case justified it.

But at last we got into committee, and here is the Bill: let us see how the time of the House was managed by the Government—whether, as the termination of the session was impending, the noble lord, conscious of the magnitude of the duties which he left unperformed or neglected, or his skilful and faithful coadjutor the Chancellor of the Exchequer, already acquainted with the value of time from previous experience in his budget, came forward with a penurious spirit, counting their minutes and doling out their instants at the last: let us see how efficiently, how ably, they had prepared their Bill for the House of Commons in that week spent in committee on the Sugar Bill, the very week in which the fish dinner ought to have taken place. In the first place, on July 16th, when we ought to have gone into committee, the trade had discovered—and the noble member for King's Lynn brought the case before the House—that sugar refined on the Continent of Europe, before only admissible at a duty of three guineas, would in fact be admitted at a much lower rate. I

need not go into the merits of the claim for refining in bond. I will not enlarge upon the injustice of not allowing to Englishmen the privileges allowed to foreigners. I only want to remind the House that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on behalf of the Government, promised, in consequence of that discovery, to bring forward a general measure upon the subject of refining in bond, which would remedy that great inequality and injustice.

On July 20th, before going into committee, a member of this House interested in this question, the member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr G. Thomson), made an appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who replied that the Government proposed to bring in a Bill to allow refining in bond for home consumption. On the very same day the member for Kings Lynn brought forward another informality in the Bill, arising out of the description of British plantation growth and produce inserted in the Bill, upon which the Government at that time were unable to give any answer. On the following day, the 21st, the member for Kings Lynn opened what he called his 'masked battery' of twenty-five arithmetical blunders in the Bill, and on the same day other objections with regard to the arrangement of the Bill were made by the right honourable member for Cambridge University (Mr Goulburn). After all this—after, in fact, influencing the conduct of the trade, and receiving on their part from the member for Kings Lynn their thanks for the satisfactory manner in which the question of refining in bond was settled—the measure for refining in bond was withdrawn by the Government.

Of course, I need not say that when a Government comes forward in committee and announces one day its intention of proposing a measure which is satisfactory to the trade, whose interests are in question, and on another day withdraws the announcement—these are circumstances that in a free Parliament must lead to discussion. Why, what are we here for but to attend to the interest of these classes and these trades, many of whom are our constituents? The Government when they had made so important a promise and afterwards withdrawn that promise, cannot find fault with us because we have

not passed over their conduct without criticism. The first Bill is withdrawn—a second Bill is introduced, in which the twenty-five blunders are dealt with: seven of them are corrected and two new ones are created in correcting the seven. Sixteen of the old blunders are reprinted in this second Sugar Bill—a Bill introduced absolutely with a skeleton schedule. So matured are the projects of the Government—in such a business-like manner are their schemes submitted to this House—so determined are the Government that the House of Commons should have no opportunity to enter into vexatious discussions.

Will it be believed that it was found necessary to withdraw the second Bill also and introduce a third, and in the third the Government confessed to the old sixteen blunders which they would not correct, and to the two new ones which they made correcting others of the old, making altogether twenty-five acknowledged blunders of the Government, and leaving still seven unacknowledged, which we have authorised by our legislation—blunders of such a character as calculating that there are four groats in a shilling! But what is the result of all this? After ten days' discussion in the House of Commons upon the resolutions, with the Speaker in the chair, six days' discussion and seven divisions take place in committee, solely occasioned by the imperfect preparation of these measures—these three graceful emanations of administrative genius—this skeleton Bill and its companions are finally withdrawn. .

Now, I have carried you through the sugar question, I am approaching the end of the session, I am well aware that I have trespassed upon the time of the House: these are the sayings and doings of ten months that I have to condense within these observations, and I have touched nothing of a light character. I have endeavoured to put the ends fairly before the House in a clear, if not an efficient manner, not mixing up subjects together, but tracing from its source to its termination the whole course of legislative and ministerial management in each particular branch. I have now put the House in possession of the facts respecting the sugar question; and I ask the House and the country, is it possible to substantiate, in respect of this the

largest and most considerable feature in the second moiety of the session, that there is any reason for the people of England to lose their confidence in the privileges of their member or in the forms of this House to which those members are returned?

There is another very important point to which it is my duty to advert. In referring to the discussions upon the sugar question, which lasted for ten days, I mentioned that of those ten days two were taken up by episodes, the 'missing dispatch' and the third budget, but there were other circumstances which absorbed our attention and diverted our consideration from the great question before us. Almost every day during those ten days of discussion there was a writ moved for, there was the Derby case, the Sligo, and then the Derby again for two more hours, and this reminds me what an amazing quantity of time has been lost this session in moving writs and dealing with delinquent boroughs. I want to know, I have tried to ascertain—for all that I do is merely severe investigation, and I give no opinion, except in asking you to draw inferences as we go on—how much time has been wasted about the conduct of delinquent boroughs this session, and how far the House of Commons is responsible for that. It is a subject, I know, which has much engaged the attention of the noble lord. We got into a mess at the beginning of the session about delinquent boroughs. No one knew exactly what to do with them. The question arose whether, when there had been treating at an election, the constituency ought to be virtually disfranchised. Some were of opinion that they ought—other that they ought not, all was confusion. In fact, it was eminently an occasion which called for a leader of the House of Commons to come forward and condescend to guide public opinion and the conduct of the House.

If the leader of the House of Commons—a man celebrated for his constitutional knowledge—of great historical attainments—a man who, when called upon to act, has the power of generalising from a large quantity of facts stored in his mind—a scholar as well as a statesman, and in my opinion certainly not deficient in courage—if, I say, a man in this eminent

position of a great constitutional statesman and leader of the House of Commons could have spared some little time from those councils wherein he arrived at a fixed determination not to change the sugar laws, to point out to the House what was the just and proper course to be pursued with regard to the delinquent boroughs, we might perhaps have saved some of that valuable time which has been lost. The delinquent boroughs first brought under the notice of the House caused little debate. At last Derby came before us, and it was debated on no fewer than five occasions. The Harwich case was debated four times. Horsham six times, and Leicester twice. In all there were nineteen considerable discussions upon the subject of issuing writs to these places. This was the consequence of the House having adopted no principle to regulate its decisions with reference to these questions. While all this irregular work was going on and time was wasting, because the House of Commons was not properly led, a great deal of legislation was in progress about the delinquent boroughs.

The honourable member for Flint,¹ who is an extreme purist, and a supporter of ministers, ashamed of their not having legislated for the delinquent boroughs, himself introduced a measure on the subject, which he called the 'Borough Elections Bill,' which was called 'No. I.' I find by the official record that this Bill was ordered, read a first time, and then 'No. I.' was withdrawn. Not satisfied with this result, the honourable member for Flint set to work again with 'Borough Elections Bill, No. II.,' which was ordered, read a first time, read a second time, considered in committee, and then withdrawn. All this time you were left without any principle to guide you in dealing with this important subject. At last the thing began to get interesting. It was seen that the member for Flint, whose name certainly justified him in appealing to the House, had tried his 'prentice hand' at legislation, had failed, and the Horsham Borough Bill somehow got upon the table. The Horsham Bill was read a first, and after considerable debate, a second time. Matters had now arrived at such a pass (it

¹ Sir John Hanmer.

was what the Italians call an *imbroglio*), that the noble lord thought it was time to exert himself. He accordingly took the business into his own hand. The Horsham Bill was withdrawn, and a measure called the 'Corrupt Practices at Elections Bill' was introduced, which, after several discussion, was passed through all its stages. That shows what a Government can do when it sets about it. But this ought to have been done before, and then the House would not have been troubled with the two Bills of the honourable member for Flint, and the Horsham episode, nor with the nineteen debates upon the question of issuing writs.

However, the noble lord having at last got the Corrupt Practices at Elections Bill through this House sent it to another place where he can do as he likes. There a most extraordinary state of things prevails. In this House the Government has at least an Opposition by courtesy, but in another place there is not at present even the semblance of an Opposition. Three or four, I must not say noble lords, but mysterious entities—were all who were assembled upon the occasion when the Corrupt Practices at Elections Bill came under consideration in another place, the other members of that assembly on August 16th were in different quarters, and employed in different work. The select few who remained at their posts were quite a constitutional party. They were all Whigs, and having no one else to attack, they began quarrelling among themselves. The Lord Chancellor moved the second reading of the Bill, whereupon the Lord Chief Justice of England—the Attorney-General of the Reform Bill, recollect—and one, therefore, who knows all about it in point of law, as all Attorney-Generals do—declared that he had felt it his duty to come down to the House—I will avoid infringing the rules of debate by saying that, in another place, who has very well known and much more useful than some people imagine, an eminent person did say that he felt it his duty to come down there for the sole purpose of opposing the measure, and I declared that it was his duty to do, and of every day in the year. Well, upon another party, I fear when I come to the

highest respect, and who exercises in another place the functions which the noble lord so ably discharges here, got up and withdrew the Government measure! I make no comment on that proceeding, it is not my object to do so; but I call upon the noble lord, who is a man of generous temperament, to bear all these circumstances in mind, and then I think he will not get up and complain of the abuse of the time of this House in some such terms as these:—‘Here we are, at August 30, and nothing done; it is you gentlemen, opposite, it is your factious and malignant opposition who have wasted the public time, and destroyed the health of the Government—on you alone the responsibility rests.’

I have now done with this subject; and I may observe that I was reminded of these writs for the delinquent boroughs by what occurred during the sugar debate—that great question which it was the determination of the Government not to have introduced to our notice, but which the indomitable will of my noble friend the member for King’s Lynn, of whom it may be said *quod vult valde vult*, forced upon the attention of the House.

I ask the House, if it has done me the favour to attend to the argument which I have endeavoured to place before it, whether I have not given you some information which may enable you to form a judgment as to whether the blame of legislative failure in the present session rests with the House of Commons or in another quarter. I might point out that during the ten months we have been sitting here there has been sedition in England, insurrection in Ireland, and revolution in Europe. I should like to have seen the Whigs in Opposition with such advantages as these. I think that then, indeed, the time of the House, if it had the power of sitting twenty months in the year instead of ten, would have been fully expended; but for that object or for that result I will not now inquire.

I have already learned from the noble member at the head of the Foreign Department, the administration of the foreign affairs are conducted in the most judicious manner which has occurred since I entered Parliament.

were every day occurring which would have justified much discussion, there has been manifested on the part of the House an extreme desire not to press upon the Government nor to expend the public time by discussion upon topics connected with our external relations. For my own part I must say, that I suffer some twinges of conscience for not having performed my duty to the merchants engaged in that trade, by bringing forward the question of the affairs of the River Plate, as the noble lord knows it was my intention to have done, at the commencement of the session. However, having painful experience of the complicated nature of those transactions, and feeling that all the energies of the noble lord were required by and all his time occupied with other matters, I resolved not to compel him to turn to the dusty records in which the River Plate question is involved, to make himself familiar with all the details of six missions, and abandoned my intention of submitting it to the consideration of the House.

So much for foreign affairs. As regards our own country, I think that the condition of England question has not occupied much of our time. There was an occasion when that question might legitimately have been brought under discussion—I mean at the moment the monster petition was presented to this House. It was generally understood that such a discussion was then to take place, and but one feeling prevailed upon the occasion—namely, that it would be for the advantage of all interests that the question should be fully and fairly debated. I will not enter into the merits of that question, all I am anxious to do is, to bring to the recollection of the House that with respect to the state of England no discussion has taken place in the House of Commons. As regards Europe and England there has been no waste of public time. Let us see if there has been any waste of time with respect to Ireland.

Early in the year, when Parliament met, its attention was called, in the Queen's Speech, to the state of Ireland. The Government introduced a measure—I believe a very good one—which was fairly discussed, and passed through both Houses. Nevertheless, it is a fact which must not be forgotten, that a noble friend of mine in the other House, whilst supporting that

Bill, took the opportunity of asking the Government whether they did not intend to go further? He asked them whether they did not think it advisable to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and to pass a law to make treason felony? The Government could give no satisfactory reply. They did nothing then, but subsequently they were obliged to adopt both of my noble friend's suggestions. That circumstance alone shows how friendly an Opposition the Government has had to deal with. On another occasion a noble duke expressed an opinion that the Government ought to renew the Alien Act. The Government said at the time, that they did not know what they might do; but in a few days after they did as they were told.

I put this question to the House: when an insurrection took place in Ireland, and the Government felt it their duty to propose stringent and unconstitutional, but for the time necessary, measures, what was the conduct of the House of Commons? Did the Government experience any inconvenience from an enforcement of those ancient forms which our predecessors created and cherished as the defence of a minority, and for the preservation of public liberty? The question was for the rescinding of all the civil liberties of Ireland; but, the necessity for the measure being felt to be complete, was the opportunity taken by any member to make speeches attacking or in any way hampering the Government? Did even any demagogue elevate himself on that occasion in order to excite the passions of a distant multitude? Left as we are without leaders, without a general manager of the House, split into sections, everything at the discretion of individual members, what upon that occasion was the conduct of the House of Commons? I say it was a model for any constitutional assembly in Europe. The traditional good sense, the instinctive spirit of the English nation, proved themselves on that occasion. We showed a great example to Europe, and that this old Parliamentary constitution which it is now the fashion to vilify as inefficient, unable to do its work, and not adapted to this enlightened and statistical age, as antiquated and cumbersome, could combine, if necessary, the energy of a despotism with the enthusiasm of a republic.

I have now tested the two causes which are alleged for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. I am not aware that I have omitted any topic which I ought to have introduced. I think I have shown that the causes alleged are not founded in fact. If time has been wasted it has not been owing to the conduct of members, or the forms of the House. Time, however, has been wasted, and it remains for me to acquaint you with the consequences of that waste of time.

I am going to read the bills of mortality for the session of 1848. The obituary is almost complete, being drawn up as late as last Saturday night. This is what the country has lost. I hold in my hand a list of forty-seven Bills, all of them important, and many referring to subjects of great interest. More than two-thirds of them are Government measures, and therefore they ought not to have been brought forward unless demanded for the public weal. I will say nothing of the Jewish Disabilities Bill and the measures respecting the navigation laws: they have consecrated monuments of their own, and are not in my list. But here is a list of forty-seven Bills abandoned, withdrawn, or postponed during the last six months—a consequence of the time which has been wasted—Outgoing Tenants (Ireland) Bill; Borough Elections Bill, Elective Franchise and Registration of Electors (Ireland) Bill, Polling Places (Ireland) Bill; Audit of Railway Accounts Bill, Schoolmasters (Scotland) Bill; Tenants at Will (Ireland) Bill, Metropolitan Police Bill, Agricultural Tenant-right Bill, Poor Law Union Charges Bill; Qualification of Members Bill, Tithe Rent Charge, &c. (Ireland) Bill; Borough Elections (No 2) Bill, Horsham Borough Bill; Lunatic Asylums (Scotland) Bill; Qualification and Registration of Electors (Ireland) Bill, Election and Polling Places (Ireland) Bill, Light Dues Bill; Scientific Societies Bill; Roman Catholic Charitable Trusts Bill; Roman Catholic Relief Bill; Sale of Bread Bill; Highways Bill; Waste Lands (Ireland) Bill; Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Allowances Bill; Landed Property (Ireland) Bill; Bakehouses Bill; Life Policies of Assurance Bill, Cruelty to Animals Prevention Bill; Clerks of the Peace (Dublin) Bill; Appeals in Criminal Cases Bill; Smoke Prohibition Bill;

Remedies against the Hundred Bill; Registering Births, &c. (Scotland) Bill; Marriage (Scotland) Bill; Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Bill; Provident Associations Fraud Prevention Bill; Chancery Proceedings Regulation Bill; Charity Trusts Regulation Bill; Fees (Court of Chancery) Bill; Legacies to Charitable Institutions Bill; Officers of Courts of Justice (Ireland) Bill; Assimilation of Appointments Bill; Poor Removal (England and Scotland) Bill; Renewable Leasehold Conversion (Ireland) Bill.

I hope that I have now shown that the members of this House are not responsible for the waste of public time; that if there has been vacillation, it is not the House of Commons that has wavered; that if there has been weakness it is not we who can be charged with infirmity of purpose. I have endeavoured to vindicate the House of Commons from the opprobrium of being the cause of a great public evil. I call it a great public evil; it is more—it is a great national calamity, because what is the nature of the charge which is proclaimed? It is this, that the system which prevails in this country is a system incompetent to pass those laws and carry those measures which are necessary for the public welfare. I cannot imagine a state of circumstances more grave or more perilous.

Having endeavoured to persuade the House that the alleged causes of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs are not the real causes, I think it is but right—I think it is but frank—to state what I think the real cause to be. In my opinion, it is not difficult to discover; it is not remote; it is neither distant nor hard to find. I shall fairly state it, with no personal feeling of any kind. I am willing to admit that honourable gentlemen opposite, as far as personal qualities are concerned, need not, upon the whole, shrink from competition with any body of men in this House who may reasonably be called upon to administer the Government of the country; but I must say that, if I be asked the cause of the great evil at issue—this avowal of political incompetency in the institutions of the country—I find the cause there. (The honourable member here pointed to the Treasury Bench amidst the loudest cheers.) I see there a body of men who acceded to power without a Par-

liamentary majority. I think that they were justified by the exigency of the case in so acceding to power—nay, that their conduct was in accordance with the practice and the genius of the Constitution; but though they were in the first instance justified in taking office without a Parliamentary majority, they are not justified in retaining it under such circumstances; and their having done so has occasioned two results, both of a very serious description.

In the first place, we have a cabinet who, in preparing their measures, have no conviction that those measures will be carried. After all their deliberations, after all their foresight, after all their observation of the times, after all their study of the public interest, when their measures are launched from the cabinet into this House, they are not received here by a confiding majority—confiding, I mean, in their faith in the statesmanlike qualifications of their authors, and in their sympathy with the great political principles professed by the members of the administration. On the contrary, the success of their measures in this House depends on a variety of small parties, who, in their aggregate, exceed in number and influence the party of the ministers. The temper of one leader has to be watched; the indication of the opinion of another has to be observed; the disposition of a third has to be suited; so that a measure is so altered, remoulded, remodelled, patched, cobbled, painted, veneered, and varnished, that at last no trace is left of the original scope and scheme; or it is withdrawn in disgust by its originators, after having been subjected to prolonged and elaborate discussions in this House. This is one of the great causes of that waste of the public time which, in these days, is as valuable as public treasure.

There is another inconvenience resulting from the present position of the Government—in my opinion more serious, if not so flagrant—and that is, it is impossible to expect from ministers thus situated those matured, finished, and complete measures which, under other circumstances, we should have a right to demand from them. Men in their situation will naturally say, ‘What is the use of taking all these pains, of bestowing all this care, study, and foresight on the preparation of a measure, when

the moment it is out of our hands' it ceases to be the measure of the cabinet, and becomes essentially the measure of the House of Commons?' And, therefore, measures are thrown before us with the foregone conclusion that we are to save the administration much care and trouble in preparing the means of governing the country. Thus it happens that the House of Commons, instead of being a purely legislative body, is every day becoming a more administrative assembly. The House of Commons, as now conducted, is a great committee, sitting on public affairs, in which every man speaks with the same right, and most of us with the same weight: no more the disciplined array of traditional influences and hereditary opinions—the realised experience of an ancient society and of a race that for generations has lived and flourished in the high practice of a noble system of self-government—that is all past. For these the future is to provide us with a compensatory alternative in the conceits of the illiterate, the crotchets of the whimsical, the violent courses of a vulgar ambition, that acknowledges no gratitude to antiquity—to posterity no duty; until at last this free and famous Parliament of England is to subside to the low-water mark of those national assemblies and those provisional conventions that are at the same time the terror and the derision of the world.

Sir, I trace all this evil to the disorganisation of party. I know that there are gentlemen in this House who affect to deprecate party government. I am not now going to enter into a discussion respecting party government; but this I will tell you—as I have told you before, in a manner which has not yet been met by any of the gentlemen who oppose my views on this subject—that you cannot choose between party government and Parliamentary government. I say you can have no Parliamentary government if you have no party government; and therefore when gentlemen denounce party government, they strike at that scheme of government which, in my opinion, has made this country great, and which, I hope, will keep it great. I can foresee, though I dare not contemplate, the consequences of the system that now prevails. They are weak words that would describe them as prejudicial to

the realm, perilous to Parliament, fatal to that high tone of public life that is the best security for national grandeur and public liberty. It is more than this; it is the *finis fatorum* of the great Dardanian house. I really believe that, if you persist in this system, it will effect results which no revolution has yet succeeded in accomplishing—which none of those conspirators that you have lately disturbed in their midnight conclaves have had the audacity to devise. I know no institution in the country that can long withstand its sapping and deleterious influence. As for the class of public men who have hitherto so gloriously administered the affairs of this country, I believe they will be swept off the face of the political world. For my part, I protest against the system; I denounce it. Even at the eleventh hour, I call upon the country to brand it with its indignant reprobation. But, whatever may be the consequences—whatever may be the fortunes of individuals or the fate of institutions—I at least have had the satisfaction of calling public attention to this political plague-spot—I at least have had the satisfaction of attempting to place in a clear light the cause of this great national evil. I have had more, I have had the consolation of justifying this great assembly, in which it is my highest honour to hold a seat, and of vindicating, in the face of England, the character and conduct of the House of Commons.

THE SLOUGH BANQUET, May 1858.

[The years 1857 and 1858 were the years of the great Indian Mutiny. Early in May 1858 a proclamation reached this country which had been issued by Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India, to the inhabitants of Oude, threatening with confiscation all the great landowners who should not return to their allegiance within a certain time. Lord Ellenborough was the President of the Board of Control, in the newly-formed Government of Lord Derby, and he immediately wrote to Lord Canning censuring his proclamation in very strong terms. He directed the despatch to be made public, and forthwith drew down upon himself a storm of indignation, not only from Lord Canning's friends, who were numerous and powerful, but from all the enemies of the Government. Lord Ellenborough himself was compelled to resign in consequence of the publication of this despatch. But the Opposition were not satisfied with this result. Mr. Cardwell, on May 14, moved a vote of censure on the Government, and at first it appeared likely that he would command a considerable majority. As time went on, however, the face of affairs changed. Further reflection convinced many members of the House that if Lord Ellenborough had been hasty Lord Canning had been highly imprudent. Sir James Graham made a strong speech in favour of the Government; so did Mr. Bright. The refusal of Mr. Vernon Smith (Lord Lyveden), Lord Ellenborough's predecessor, to produce certain letters which had been written to him by Lord Canning, informing him that an explanation of the proclamation was on its way, and his neglect to inform Lord Ellenborough of the communication he had received, told strongly on the House; and when the news arrived from India that Sir James Outram heartily disapproved of the proclamation, the combination against Government began to show symptoms of a thaw. On Friday, May 21, the crash came. Member after member rose on the Liberal side of the House to beg Mr. Cardwell to withdraw his resolution; ¹ but the picture may well be left to the master hand, who drew the following sketch of it at a banquet in honour of the members for Buckinghamshire, given at Slough on May 26.]

¹ It was withdrawn.

GENTLEMEN, though your kind invitation to meet you here to day was offered to my colleague and myself before I was qualified to return thanks for the toast which has just been given, I can assure you that I am gratified that this unexpected opportunity is afforded me of expressing the hope that I do not misinterpret the reception you have accorded me into the belief that as far as you can form an opinion you are not dissatisfied with the conduct of Her Majesty's ministers during their brief tenure of office. I may be permitted on this occasion—the first, I believe, that any minister of the Crown has had of meeting a large body of his fellow-subjects since the present Government came into office—of recalling to you for a moment the circumstances under which we acceded to office. You will perhaps remember that a Government supposed to be omnipotent suddenly fell to pieces with a collapse altogether unprecedented. You will perhaps recollect that Her Majesty, in the exercise of her constitutional prerogative, in these circumstances applied to my noble friend the present Prime Minister of England, and requested him to undertake the great responsibility of directing public affairs. You will, perhaps, recollect that, with a frankness which belongs to him, Lord Derby, not eagerly grasping at office, represented to the Queen, as it became him to do, the position of himself and his friends in the House of Commons, communicating to Her Majesty that in that powerful assembly he could not, from the extraordinary circumstances in which the present Parliament was elected, answer for receiving support to his Government from a party much exceeding one-third of the number that formed the House. Then, though he expressed his readiness under all circumstances and at all hazards to undertake the responsibility, he respectfully counselled Her Majesty to pause and well consider the great contingencies at issue, and not hastily call on him to undertake the charge which she had so graciously offered to intrust to him. I say, therefore, there was no unseemly eagerness for office on our part. I may remind you that Her Majesty availed herself of the opportunity thus afforded her by Lord Derby. Her Majesty graciously condescended to reconsider the circumstances of the

time and of the State, and it was only after that second consideration that the Queen expressed her conviction that it was the duty of Lord Derby to undertake the trust, however difficult it might be. From that expression of Her Majesty Lord Derby did not shrink, and he took upon himself, with all its difficulties, the office of Prime Minister of this country.

The heritage of difficulties to which he succeeded was not a slight one, and it would have been no easy matter to have encountered those difficulties even if we had been supported by an overwhelming majority of the House of Commons. It is well now for us to think lightly of the perils we have passed through—even to forget them; but when I tell you, and tell you seriously, that the question of peace or war when we acceded to office was not a question of weeks or days, but of hours,¹ I am sure you will remember that peace has been preserved, while the honour of the country has been vindicated. Let me also remind you that at that very moment two of your fellow-subjects were lingering, and had long lingered, in a foreign dungeon, and that the efforts of a Government which boasted of being irresistible in its domestic strength and in its foreign policy had not succeeded in relieving the misery of their position, or in vindicating the honour of their country. But in a few weeks—I might almost say in a few days—the Government of Lord Derby, with all these difficulties to encounter, and with its unquestionable want of strength in the popular House of the Constitution, did succeed in freeing these two neglected and suffering Englishmen²—brought them back in triumph to that country which had so long felt indignation inexpressible at their unmerited sufferings and shame for the weakness of that Government which had permitted them so long to endure it.

I think, therefore, I may also refer to that circumstance as one to which the Government of Lord Derby, so often described

¹ With France, in consequence of late events and the 'Conspiracy to Murder' Bill.

² The two English engineers taken on board the 'Cagliari' and imprisoned by the Neapolitan Government. See *Life of Prince Consort*, vol. iv. p. 215, for justification of language here used.

as a weak Government, may look back with pride and satisfaction. Then let me remind you that during all this period, while we had to maintain and establish peace with France—while we were vindicating the honour of England and the rights and privileges of all that dwell on its soil—while we were freeing from a foreign dungeon our suffering fellow-countrymen, the arts of faction were pursuing us on every side. A war between Naples and Sardinia—which would have been a war that would have set the whole world in flames—was nearly precipitated in order to inconvenience and perhaps upset a Government which was the choice, after due reflection, of the Queen of this country, and which was honoured by her confidence, not formally, but sincerely and cordially, because they were the only party who would come forward and incur the responsibility of carrying on the Government.

The foreign difficulties were not the only ones to which in these difficult circumstances we succeeded. The finances of the country were in a position of the most extreme difficulty; and—what was still worse—they were imagined by the country generally to be in a position even more embarrassing than they really were. The tendency of that feeling greatly increased the difficulty of dealing with the subject, because it induced depression and even panic in the public mind, and acted in a most injurious manner on the commercial enterprise of the country. These financial difficulties were looked forward to by our opponents, equally with those we encountered in our foreign affairs, as the means by which it was hoped our failure might be accomplished. It does not become me to refer to the measures by which these financial difficulties were encountered, but I may be permitted to make this single observation, that it was my duty, as the Minister of Finance in the Government of Lord Derby—in the midst of this hostile House of Commons, and facing a band of opponents such as few have had to encounter—to propose measures to meet the emergency which had the singular and unprecedented fortune of being passed with general acclamation.¹ But our difficulties were not limited merely to the extreme danger of our foreign

¹ See Third Budget Speech, 1858

affairs, when the question of peace or war was hourly before us; they were not limited to the deficit in our finances, which can be only counted by millions; we had before us the state of India, and had to consider and determine on the policy on which the weal or woe of that great peninsula depended, and with which the renown and the power of England were so intimately connected.

It is unnecessary to refer to what has taken place within the last twelve months in India. The great events that have taken place there are graven on every man's heart and convictions. They were accompanied with circumstances of such harrowing interest that there is no man, whatever his condition may be—whether he fill the highest place in the peerage, or follow the plough and gain the prize at our agricultural meetings—who is not cognisant of all the principal details and features of those great events, and who does not feel for many of the startling incidents that occurred in the course of these transactions. But we had to decide—for it was the turning-point of our Indian empire—the character of the policy which ought to be pursued; whether it should be a policy of unmitigated vengeance, or whether the time had arrived when we should attempt to rebuild our great empire in the East on principles of a very different character, and leading, as we believed, to a very different result. Was it to be military occupation by an army four times greater in amount than any army of Europeans that ever entered that country? Was it to be military occupation, attended by enormous taxation, by a draining of Her Majesty's subjects from this country, and by a perpetual exhaustion of our resources? Or were we to recognise that vengeance had done its duty? Were we to recognise that the time had arrived, or was fast arriving, when, upon the fall of the rebellious capital, we ought to announce to the inhabitants of India the principle on which we propose to reconstruct our empire—a principle that we believed must contribute to their happiness and to the welfare and power and glory of this country?

Was it always to be massacre and confiscation? Or, on the other hand, was it to be discriminating amnesty? Was

it to be respect for private property, toleration for religion, and a due and decent regard for the manners and customs of the people? Were we or were we not to distinguish the great body of the millions—who after all are Her Majesty's subjects in India—from those military and treacherous rebels who have received or will receive their due meed of reward? These are the three great subjects, gentlemen, which have occupied our councils and which have demanded our management since we came into office—Foreign affairs, that involved the question of peace or war, financial arrangements, that involved the question of millions of a deficiency and a reduction of taxation, and the principles upon which a great empire should be reconstructed in India—three great subjects, gentlemen, and we have been in office three months! And yet we are told that we are a weak Government and have done nothing! Why, we have vindicated the honour of England, we have preserved peace, we have freed from imprisonment our suffering countrymen, we have met an immense deficiency, and at the same time reduced taxation, and we have laid down principles for the reconstruction of our Indian empire which England approves and Europe admires, and which, if acted on, will maintain the greatness and glory of our country.

Gentlemen, we have had to perform this difficult task under unprecedented difficulties. I am bound to declare, especially after some observations that have been made to-day, that I for one—and from my position I may be considered a candid and impartial judge—have no reason to complain of the present House of Commons. Considering that it was elected under the auspices of our rivals, considering that it was supposed to possess an overwhelming majority against us when we assumed the reins of office, I am bound to say that the Government have received from the House of Commons, as a body, a generous courtesy, and that, on more than one occasion, the sense and spirit of the House of Commons have baffled the unceasing intrigues and the restless machinations by which, from the first moment of our entering office, the Government of the Queen has been assailed. And, gentlemen, this leads me to the very key of the position. There exists at this moment in England that which has not existed since the days of Charles II. There is in

England at this moment a cabal—a cabal which has no other object but to upset the Government of the Queen, and to obtain their ends in a manner the most reckless but the most determined.

Now, this cabal consists of some scheming English politicians and some foreign intriguers. They possess resources of all kinds, and in considerable amount, and they are reckless of the mode in which they dispose of them. Their social influences are considerable, and they are perverted without the slightest remorse to obtain their political ends. They possess great sources of political information, especially with regard to foreign affairs, obtained in a manner not very constitutional. They have succeeded in doing that which no cabal in modern times, I am proud to say, has yet succeeded in accomplishing ; they have in a great degree corrupted the once pure and independent press of England. Innocent people in the country—who look to the leading articles in the newspapers for advice and direction—who look to what are called leading organs to be the guardians of their privileges and the directors of their political consciences—are not the least aware, because this sort of knowledge travels slowly, that leading organs now are place-hunters of the cabal, and that the once stern guardians of popular rights simper in the enervating atmosphere of gilded saloons. Yes, gentlemen, it is too true that the shepherds who were once the guardians of the flock are now in league with the wolves, and therefore it is that, though we have been only three months in office, though during that space we have vindicated your honour, maintained the peace of Europe, which was in manifest peril, rescued our countrymen from a foreign dungeon, made up a great deficiency in your finances, and yet reduced taxation, and laid a deep foundation for your future empire in the East—innocent people in the country who read leading organs believe we are a Government that do nothing ; that we are a weak Government, and not entitled to the confidence of our country.

But, gentlemen, what would happen if the cabal were successful? You know our policy, and you can judge of it by its fruits. Let the cabal be successful, and in foreign affairs you would have a truckling foreign policy, while in home affairs you will have gradually established a strong and strict

centralised Government, on the model of that Government which the cabal admire, and whenever the spirit of the country is interested in those improvements which the spirit of the age demands—whether they be social, or financial, or constitutional—and the settlement of which is the first duty and the most pressing task of a real statesman, then you will have your attention distracted from this Conservative progress by incomprehensible wars carried on in distant parts, commenced for no earthly purpose, and terminating in the waste of your resources, and, perhaps, of your reputation. Well, then, you have to choose between our policy and the policy of the cabal, and I am here to day to ask the people of the county of Buckingham, and to ask the people of England, will you support Her Majesty's Government against the cabal?

Well, gentlemen, so deluded was the cabal, so implicitly did they believe their own leading articles written by themselves—so entirely did they credit the statement that the people of England are against those who, in a moment of constitutional difficulty, at Her Majesty's twice-expressed wish, came forward to assist her, that thinking that the opportunity was ripe, having, as they imagined, a packed House of Commons, and having every advantage in their favour, they brought forward a vote of censure upon a ministry which in three months had effected those great results to which I have alluded. Well, gentlemen, the moment notice was given of that motion it was considered among shortsighted hangers on in politics that our doom was sealed as certainly as is that of a man who has been committed and sentenced, and is only waiting for the arrival of Mr Calcraft. All the wise and experienced politicians thought the game was up. They knew, according to their own fancies, that no one would look into the merits of the question, and nobody would then remember what we had done or consider what we might do. It was in their minds a mere sum in political arithmetic, which the merest novice in politics could calculate and fix in an instant. There were a greater number of members of the House of Commons at the service of the cabal. The signal was given by the leader. There were solemn and pious tools always at the service of the cabal, and the thing was to be done offhand.

Well, gentlemen, they fixed upon an Indian subject, from which they stole their tactics—and which revealed their views. They were, in fact, resolved to loot the Treasury. There is nothing in my recollection of politics—which, owing to your continual confidence in me, extends to a period of no very short duration, for it was in the presence¹ of many of those now assembled here that I made my first speech in public life long before I had the honour of being a member of the House of Commons—there is, I say, in my political experience no record of any scheme more scientifically managed than that one by which it was hoped to accomplish the fall of the Government. A gentleman in the House of Commons brought forward the motion, and he was a man of unimpeachable character. The cabal, which had itself rather a tainted character—chose its instruments with pharisaical accuracy. I can assure you that when the right honourable gentleman who brought forward the motion in the House of Commons rose to impeach me I was terrified at my own shortcomings, and I listened attentively to a *nisi-prius* narrative, ending with a resolution, which I think must have been drawn up by a conveyancer. In the other House of Parliament a still greater reputation condescended to appear upon the human stage—Gamaliel² himself, with the broad phylacteries of faction upon his forehead—he called upon God to witness, in the voice and accents of majestic adoration, that he was not as other men were—for that he was never influenced by party motives.

Well, gentlemen, what happened under these circumstances? Why, 'something which I am quite sure is unprecedented in the parliamentary history of England. When we hear of faction, when we hear of the arts and manœuvres of party, when we read sometimes that party spirit will be the ruin of this country, let us take a calm review of the affairs of

¹ Mr. Disraeli said 'on the same spot;' but on this point his memory must have played him false, as I have seen the number of the local paper containing the speech of June 9, 1832, at High Wycombe, with a marginal note in Lady Beaconsfield's handwriting stating that this was Mr. Disraeli's first public speech, and her Ladyship could only have had the information from Mr. Disraeli himself.

² Lord Shaftesbury.

the last fortnight; and I think we must come to the conclusion that in a country free and enlightened as in England there are limits to party feeling which the most dexterous managers of the passions of mankind cannot ever pass, and that in the great hulk of those who sit in Parliament, and in the great bulk of the people of England, there is a genuine spirit of patriotism which will always eventually triumph. That such is the case may be seen from the late debate. A motion was brought forward about a fortnight ago by a right honourable gentleman who sits for the city of Oxford which was to terminate the existence of the Government, and during the debate which ensued, protracted as it was, you may, perhaps, have observed that the Government very reluctantly advanced to take part in it, although, being as we were upon our trial, we were prepared, if necessary, to defend our conduct on every point, and to vindicate with a becoming spirit our deeds, our duty, and our position. But instead of that, here was a bill of indictment preferred against the Government, which commenced as a vote of censure, and which upon the last night of the debate was expanded into a general vote of confidence.

Now, who conducted that debate in defence of the Government and in opposition to the motion? Why, not members of the Government, but independent members of the House of Commons—some of them gentlemen of great eloquence and authority not connected with the Government in politics, but, on the contrary, not professing those general principles which form the basis of our policy. They yet saw through the flimsy web, and despised the authors of so perfidious and pernicious a movement. We, gentlemen, refer to that debate with confidence and triumph that we can fairly ask for a verdict at the hands of the people of this country. In point of fact, that verdict has been already given. Until that vote of censure was brought forward we were receiving from the people of England a fair and unimpassioned trial. We were accepted as a Government which, having taken office under such difficult circumstances as I have described, and after the peculiar exercise of the prerogative of the Crown, was deserving of a fair chance, and we were having a kindly trial. I do not believe that the great body of the people of this country had any feel-

ing but one, and that was a general feeling for those who had acceded to office under great difficulties, and who had sedulously and with devotion endeavoured to perform their duty.

The moment, however, that this motion was brought forward and introduced in the speech which was made upon that occasion by the right honourable member for Oxford—from the moment that the debate took place, the enlightened and indignant mind of the people of England declared at the moment, and in a manner which could not be mistaken, what its sense was of the conduct of certain public characters in those transactions; and if we had gone upon the hustings—which there is very little doubt we should have done before we should have fallen—I believe that the overthrow of the cabal would have been one of the most signal in history. Now, this danger has been overcome by no unworthy management or concession on our part. It has been overcome, not by the united efforts of friends in a division, but, upon the contrary, it has been overcome by the intrinsic and internal sense of wrong-doing which prevailed in the ranks of our enemies.

There is nothing like that last Friday evening in the history of the House of Commons. We came down to the House expecting to divide at four o'clock in the morning—I myself, with my armour buckled on, prepared to deliver an address two hours after midnight—and I believe that, even with the consciousness of a good cause, that is no mean effort. Well, gentlemen, we were all assembled, our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those of our proud opponents, when suddenly there arose a wail of distress—but not from us. I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry with Her Majesty's Opposition. It was like a convulsion of nature rather than any ordinary transaction of human life. I was reminded by it of one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria or Peru. There was a rumbling murmur—a groan—a shriek—a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the house. There was a rent, a fissure in

the ground, and then a village disappeared, then a tall tower toppled down, and the whole of the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy. Are these the people whom you want to govern the country—people in whose camp there is anarchy—between whom there is discord on every point, and who are not even united by the common bond of wishing to seize upon the spoils of office?

What we have done I have, I hope, placed before you with no undue arrogance—but what they intend to do no one has had the audacity to intimate. They say that we have no policy when we are building up an empire, and yet they shrink from giving any opinion upon the document which was the subject of nights of protracted discussions. Under these circumstances my meeting you here to-day, having, as I before stated, accepted the invitation as a private member of Parliament, and not as a member of a Government, is to me a source of great congratulation, for it gives me an opportunity after these remarkable occurrences of addressing a large body of my countrymen connected with me by close and ancient ties of public confidence and private friendship, and of giving them an account of my stewardship as a minister for three months. I again ask you, then, and I ask the people of this country—‘Will you stand by the Queen’s Ministers against a cabal?’ If the country decides to stand by us, and to extend to us permanently that generous confidence, which perhaps has temporarily arisen from a sense of the injustice which we have experienced, we shall endeavour, with all the means at our command, to retain that confidence by introducing such measures as in our opinion are demanded by the necessities of the State, and our study will be constantly to promote the welfare of the people of this country.

With regard to our foreign relations, we shall still pursue that determined, but yet prudent and conciliatory system¹ which, while it will in our opinions maintain peace, will do so with honour. We shall endeavour in the management of our finances to reduce taxation, while at the same time our measures will duly respect the maintenance of public credit. We shall pursue in India that policy with which I believe the late debate

¹ Peace with Honour

has made you familiar, because we believe that it is the only policy by which we can retain that empire, and we ought to wish to retain it by considering the happiness of those 180,000,000 of persons who have in spirit long been subjects of the Queen, and who now by the literal letter of the law will owe her an undivided allegiance. We shall endeavour to obtain and to retain that confidence by temperately addressing ourselves to the solution of all those difficult questions which have too long agitated and disunited the commonwealth in which we live. We hope by the measures which we shall bring forward, whether relating to legal reform—and upon that head our measure is prepared—or to social reform, which demand the attention of any minister, or whether relating to those constitutional improvements which all wise men who are lovers of their country would wish to see effected in such a manner that they should be improvements and not mere changes—whatever may be the character of those measures, we will not shrink from bringing forward such as we shall conceive to be the best adapted for the solution of the difficulty.

But, gentlemen, we shall not be able to do so unless we are supported by the confidence and good feeling of the people of England. We have been honoured by the confidence of the Crown in a manner not merely formal, and we have accepted the responsibility of office at a great emergency, and after the deliberate expression of opinion on the part of our gracious sovereign that our acceptance of office was a public duty from which we could not shrink. Having employed the brief period during which we have been a Government in managing public affairs in the manner I have indicated, I think that we have a right to appeal to the public and to the country generally to sanction the selection of Her Majesty and to support us by the influence of public opinion. To that opinion, after the late stirring scenes in the House of Commons, upon the part of myself and my colleagues, I appeal with diffidence, and yet at the same time with confidence—with diffidence because I know that the present difficulties may require for their solution powers greater than those which we possess; but with confidence, because I have the greatest reliance on the generosity and justice of the people of England.

SPEECH ON REFORM BILL OF 1867,
Edinburgh, October 29, 1867

[This speech may be regarded as Mr Disraeli's final liberation of his own mind on the question of Reform. He speaks not to any particular audience, but to the whole world. The representation had to be reformed, and the mere fact that the Whigs had reformed it once, so far from being an argument why such work should always be entrusted to them, was rather a reason why any second reform should be undertaken by their opponents, as men more likely to redress the balance and appreciate the weak points of the existing system. The world could not stand still, nor parties either. And the Tory party indignantly repudiated the rôle sketched out for it by its adversaries of perpetual protestation and perpetual opposition. The following speech should be read together with one delivered by the late Lord Derby at Manchester on October 17, 1867. The two combined are the vindication of the Tory party from a strictly party point of view, and therefore I have inserted this one among the party speeches rather than among the reform speeches, though it must be owned that it travels over a good deal of the same ground.]

MR. CHAIRMAN, my Lords and Gentlemen—I know nothing more gratifying in the life of a public man—*nothing in its toils and in its asperities more satisfactory and soothing*, than an expression of sympathy from a body of his countrymen—nor is that gratification diminished if the sympathy comes from those who are not connected with him by any local sentiment. However much we may value the kind feeling of our neighbours, we are conscious that their estimate of our conduct may not be free from partiality.

In thanking you, Mr Chairman, for the too kind manner in which you have introduced my name to this assembly, I cannot for a moment forget—for you have yourself expressed it with frankness—that it is chiefly to be attributed to the passing of

a memorable measure which has distinguished the present session of Parliament, and with which I have in some degree been connected. I had heard that her Majesty's Ministers had carried a measure for which they were entitled to no distinction, since they had only carried a measure for which for more than seventy years the Whig party had toiled in vain—since the period when, in the year 1793, Lord Grey had been defeated by the machinations of Mr. Pitt.

Now, my lords and gentlemen, I should not take an occasion like the present to treat of the pedigree of parties, though I think myself, and have ever thought, it a subject not to be despised, and full of very serious considerations and consequences—but when a statement like this is made, and upon it is founded a series of arguments which, if left untouched and unnoticed, appear to me to have the tendency of depreciating and misrepresenting the character and conduct of public men, I cannot allow it to pass for a moment utterly uncontradicted. It is important, because it is in another form a revival and repetition of the old party dogma, that upon the most important of political subjects—namely, the question how power should be distributed in the State—one of the great historical parties of England is to be forbidden ever to touch it. My lords and gentlemen, on principle—on abstract principle—I shall protest against such a dogma; but when it is introduced to us with historical illustrations, and recommended to our notice by an appeal to the annals of our country, and to the deeds of our statesmen, I cannot help pointing out to you and to the country the entire error of the statement. Why, the question of Parliamentary reform, if we are to go to the origin of that question since the constitution of this country was settled upon its present basis, was purely and entirely a Tory question. The question of Parliamentary reform was first introduced to public notice by the great statesman who flourished at the beginning of the eighteenth century. What their motives might have been—what were the merits of their measures—it is quite unnecessary for us now to consider or to touch upon, but the fact, and the historical fact remains. The great Tory leaders of that day, no doubt, were in a great minority in the House of Com-

mons; and they believed, as has since been established as a fact, that they were in a great majority in the nation, and therefore they were anxious to alter the principles upon which the representation of the country should take place. Why, you had then motions for shorter Parliaments—motions for extending the suffrage far beyond the settlement of this year. You had motions brought forward even for secret voting, and that by men who, from their birth, their rank, their possessions, and their eloquence, are second to few of the great statesmen that ever flourished in this country. And when we are told that it was by the machinations of Mr. Pitt, who defeated Lord Grey in 1793, that the Whigs had been baffled in their perpetual efforts to carry household suffrage for seventy years—and now have been deprived of their rightful heritage by the manœuvres of the Government of Lord Derby—allow me to say that the great leaders at the commencement of the eighteenth century who brought forward these measures for Parliamentary reform, and for a number of years with signal eloquence vindicated and recommended these measures, were defeated by a powerful and no doubt a very intelligent oligarchy, through whose paramount influence for a great number of years these opinions were in abeyance.

But reaction is the law of life. A time came when, at a period of public calamity, the country began to doubt whether it was wise to entrust to an oligarchy the most considerable portion of the power of the State, and began to believe that they ought to trust more to the power of the Sovereign and the independence of the nation; and when these opinions became prevalent shortly after the American war, and when the man, as always happens, appeared to advocate these opinions, who was that man? Why, it was a youth who had formed his mind by studying the conduct of the great statesmen of the commencement of the century. It is upon record that he gave up his days and nights to the study of their eloquence. His principles of finance and commerce he found in that treaty of Utrecht which was baffled by faction, and which would have given us the advantages of that free trade, now so much vaunted, a century before or more. There, too, he found those

principles of religious toleration which now have been adopted; and among other matters, Parliamentary reform; and he advocated it as the means by which alone he could control the oligarchy then predominant. And who was that youthful statesman? It was the son of Chatham—that very Mr. Pitt who we are now told by his machinations prevented Lord Grey, and has for seventy years prevented the Whig party, from conferring upon the English people the boon of household suffrage.

My lords and gentlemen, no doubt in 1832 Lord Grey was perfectly entitled to take the line which he did—Lord Grey fairly earned the leadership upon that question of Parliamentary Reform; but when Lord Grey made his Government he never pretended that in the policy which he recommended he was recommending a policy peculiar to the Whig party. On the contrary, he said from the first that it was impossible for him to form a Government except it was upon a broad basis. He appealed, and successfully appealed, to the followers of Mr. Canning—brilliant men, experienced in administration; but that was not enough, though it gave him experienced colleagues. He felt that he could not succeed in forming a Government without a considerable support from the Tory party, and he appealed to the Duke of Richmond, the father of one of my colleagues. Therefore I say that nothing can be more idle than this statement recently brought forward, that we have invaded a land upon which we had no right to enter—that they, our political opponents, had a vested interest in this question of the representation of the people; that for seventy years they have been toiling in order to confer the boon of household suffrage upon the people of England, and that we have come forward in a manner most unauthorised, at the last moment, and are claiming a reputation for a result to which we are not entitled. I readily admit that after the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, Sir Robert Peel, by that important political paper, the Tamworth Manifesto, and by his speeches in the House of Commons, pledged the Tory party not to disturb that settlement. Whether it was a wise step on the part of Sir Robert Peel or not, no one will deny that that compact was religiously observed by the Conservative party. Every man who ever

acted with them most scrupulously assisted Sir Robert Peel in carrying that compact into fulfilment, and I never heard it for a moment whispered that we ever departed from that public engagement. Well, but of course when the very minister who brought forward in the House of Commons the Bill of 1832—Lord Grey's Bill—announced only twenty years after it was passed, in the year 1852, himself then in the high capacity of Prime Minister of England, that that law was no longer adequate to the circumstances, and that he should himself introduce a measure which would supersede it,—the Tory party were immediately freed from the engagement into which they had entered, and it was for them to consider the course that they ought to pursue. I touch upon this point because it is a matter which now has, for a very long time, circulated with impunity, but with mischievous impunity, in the country. I want to show to you that our title was clear, even historically, to deal with the greatest and most important of political questions—namely, the distribution of power in the State. After Lord John Russell had announced that he had retreated from his doctrine of finality, and that he should take an opportunity of introducing a new Reform Bill, there was a meeting of the most considerable men at that time connected with the Tory party. Sir Robert Peel had then unfortunately quitted this scene, but there were such men as Lord Derby himself—others, some of whom are now in his cabinet—there were men who have left us like Sir Robert Peel—there was Lord George Bentinck, and others—men associated in the public mind with the maintenance of what are called high Tory opinions, many of them—they met, they considered the circumstances of the case, and arrived at a definite and determined conclusion, that under no circumstances whatever was the Tory party ever to be induced to oppose a new Reform Bill—that they would always assist its introduction, and then attempt to mould it into that form which they believed would be most advantageous to the country. To that resolution, passed nearly twenty years ago, they have invariably and religiously adhered, and I can only say for myself, that from the time I ever presumed at the request of my friends to take my lead in public affairs, I have

never omitted any opportunity of claiming, whenever this question was brought forward, the right of the Tory party to deal with it.

Well, if the question is one which we had a right to deal with, the next question—and it is a much more important one—is this:—Having a right to deal with it, ought we to have dealt with it? Well, now it does appear to me that any man of sound mind—any man accustomed to consider political affairs—must have felt it was absolutely necessary for Lord Derby, in 1866, to deal with this question. Why, what are the facts of the case? They are these. For fifteen years—from 1852 till the end of 1866—the Government of the Queen, not merely the House of Commons, had been dealing with the question of Parliamentary Reform. It is a totally different thing for the Government of the Queen to deal with a question, and a mere Parliamentary party, who may endeavour to obtain the public confidence and public applause by supporting a particular line of policy. A question may be a Parliamentary question, and it may be right that it should not be precipitated in its solution, and should be matured by frequent and continuous discussions—not merely of years, but if necessary in some questions of generations; but the moment the Queen's Government comes forward and says that a question ought to be settled, the country has a right to suppose that the wisest men have given their consideration to it, and that State necessity requires that some settlement should be arrived at. You might say that it was merely the Whig party who were of this opinion. But is that the case? Every Prime Minister during these fifteen years, and every party that has been in power during these fifteen years, had announced from the Throne that the question of Parliamentary reform, which is the question of distribution of power in the State, was one which demanded consideration and settlement. Lord John Russell had dealt with the question, and had failed. Lord Aberdeen had dealt with the question, and had failed. Lord Palmerston had dealt with the question, and had failed. Lord Derby had dealt with the question, and had failed; and afterwards Lord John Russell had dealt with the question again, and had failed. You talk about agitation

in the country; but what a premium do you give for agitation when, year after year, the ministry of the Queen announce that the most important political question, the one that concerns the rights of every individual in the country, requires settlement; and year after year the attempt is made and no settlement arrived at! Why, what is the practical conclusion, under such circumstances, at which every man would arrive? Why, the practical conclusion must be this, and everybody feels it, and everybody felt it, in England, that the Government of the country was not adequate to the occasion, that it could not meet the difficulty. Well, if the Government of the country is not adequate to that which the Government of the country says is necessary to be accomplished, why, what is that but a premium on revolution?

Now, I say that no man can form a fair and accurate opinion upon that momentous question unless he clearly ascertains, in the first place, what were the relations of Lord Derby and his party to this question of Parliamentary Reform. Lord Derby acceded to office as Prime Minister for the first time in 1852, Lord John Russell having then just failed on the question of Parliamentary Reform. It was not necessary for Lord Derby in 1852 to deal with the question; and everybody felt that, however wise it might be to consider it with regard to ultimate settlement, there was no pressure for immediate solution. The measure of Lord John Russell of 1852 was generally considered even by his friends—though I think there was much to vindicate his course, to which I may afterwards advert—an immature movement. We came into office in 1852. We had not been in office ten days before notice of motions on Parliamentary Reform—some complete and comprehensive schemes, some of an isolated character—were showered upon the table like a snow-storm. Mr. Hume gave notice of a motion which he had annually made for three or four years, and the pressure of which motion had forced Lord John Russell to introduce a Bill—of making the same motion about a month after we acceded to office. The Government of Lord Derby had therefore to consider the course they would take, and the general policy they would announce. It fell to my lot in the year 1852, as leader

of the House of Commons, to express the policy of Lord Derby on the subject. It is upon record. It is upon the authentic annals of what is done in the great assembly at Westminster. We were not prepared, we told the House of Commons, in answer to the motion of Mr. Hume and those made by Mr. Locke King and others—we said we were not prepared to deal with the question of Parliamentary Reform; but we claimed our right even then if we thought it necessary to deal with it. But we said, if it be necessary on any future occasion to deal with the representation of the people, it is our opinion that a very great mistake was made on that subject in the year 1832. It was the manner in which Parliament abolished the relations between the labouring classes and the constitution of this country; and I said then, on the part of Lord Derby, that if ever we felt it to be our duty to deal with the question, we should endeavour to remedy that great deficiency. There was another great feature of policy with regard to that question to which I also on that occasion in that year called the attention of the House of Commons. I said if there is ever to be another Reform Bill, we can consent to no new measure unless adequate justice is done to that majority of the population who live in the counties. Now, those were the two great points on the part of Lord Derby—the two great conditions which we publicly announced as a party we should insist upon if ever we had to deal with the question of Reform. Well, in 1852, after the retirement of Lord Derby, Lord Aberdeen introduced a very considerable measure of reform and failed. Then came the Government of Lord Palmerston. The Government of Lord Palmerston was much employed with the Crimean war, and that was supposed to be an excuse, and was a fair excuse, for his not continuing to legislate on the subject of reform; but mark this important fact: when allusions are made to Lord Palmerston's feeling on the subject of reform, and after his successfully carrying to a conclusion the Crimean war, he appealed to the country in a most triumphant manner. What did he do? The moment that Parliament met he advised her Majesty to recommend that legislation on the subject of Parliamentary Reform should be introduced. In the following

year Lord Derby again found himself Prime Minister, when Lord Palmerston informed him that he considered it of the greatest importance that the question should be settled. The subject embarrassed the Crown, it embarrassed Parliament, it might be a source of disorder to the State, and if a temperate and well-considered measure were introduced he would give it a fair and candid consideration.

Lord Derby did make an effort in 1859. This is the next connection of Lord Derby and his party with the question of reform. He had to deal with that question. It was his opinion, after the most deliberate thought, and after the most painful investigation on the subject, that with regard to the borough franchise, any degradation of the borough franchise from 10*l* to 8*l*, or 7*l*, or 6*l*, or so on, would be utterly unsatisfactory, that it would lead to no settlement, and that you could arrive at no settlement unless you came to some household suffrage without the condition of rental value. He was not prepared to recommend that, he did not believe the country would have supported him in such a course, and therefore he endeavoured to carry out the policy which he recommended as to facilitating the admission of the working classes into the constitution by a variety of franchises. I shall not go into them now. The lodger franchise was one of them, then treated, of course, with contempt, but now, I understand, without doubt the palladium of our liberties. Well, now, these are the relations of Lord Derby to Reform. He had from the beginning had it down as his view of the case that no Bill which did not revise the relation of the working classes with the Constitution of the country, and at the same time did not do justice to the population in the counties that were so feebly represented, would be satisfactory. In 1859 you know what occurred. We were expelled from power by a resolution of Lord John Russell that no settlement of the question of Parliamentary Reform would be satisfactory which did not involve the lowering of the borough franchise. We resisted that. We believed that it was a policy which ought not to be sanctioned by the House of Commons unless it was definitely brought forward, and feeling confident that there was no mere degradation of the borough

franchise that could bring any satisfactory settlement, we recommended her Majesty to dissolve Parliament. Upon that issue we appealed to the country. The country did not give us a majority; and therefore both Parliament and the country were henceforth pledged to a lowering of the franchise in boroughs.

Well, now, what happened in the memorable seven years which elapsed from 1859 to 1866, when Lord Derby was again called to power, and when he did me the honour again to ask me to attempt to lead the House of Commons? Now, observe what has occurred in Parliament on the subject of reform in these seven years. They commenced with the measure of Lord Palmerston in 1860. That failed. They concluded with the measure of Lord John Russell in 1866, which also failed; and in the interval there were all these separate motions of Mr. Locke King and of Mr. Baines of which we have heard. Therefore, during these years—from 1860 to 1866—the question of Parliamentary Reform was constantly before the public mind and the examination of Parliament.

During that period of seven years, with the advice, I may say under the instructions of my colleagues, I expressed the principles upon which any measure of Parliamentary Reform ought to be established. Now, mark this, because there are things which you may not have heard in any speech which has been made in the city of Edinburgh. I had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure. I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and the country on this question of Reform. This was not only with the concurrence of Lord Derby, but of my colleagues. The first great point which it was my duty always to impress upon Parliament was, that we should listen to nothing that was not a complete and comprehensive measure, that all the points of the subject of Parliamentary Reform should be treated together, because we knew that upon our so treating them depended the political equilibrium which has hitherto prevailed in this country. That is the first question. What is

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the second? During these seven years I had to vindicate the principles on which disfranchisement and enfranchisement should take place. I said, 'We cannot listen a moment to the reason assigned for grouping boroughs. We cannot say the representation of any place should be entirely abrogated.' We insisted in our Bill, that no centre of representation should be abolished, and we said, 'For the increased representation you want in England, you must look to a certain class of boroughs, no doubt, to give up a portion of their claim.' And what was the third question? It was whether any Parliamentary Reform could be made satisfactory, unless you had a real and *bonâ fide* boundary commission. What was the fourth point? That justice should be done to the representation of the majority of the English nation who live in counties, and that it should be done, not merely by giving representation to the great towns which have sprung into importance since Lord Grey's Act of 1832, but by adding a considerable number directly to their representatives. What was the fifth point? We insisted upon, and supported by our vote, that the borough franchise should be established on the principle of rating. These are the five points which, for seven weary and toilsome years, I have, with the entire concurrence and at the instigation of those who share your confidence, endeavoured in the House of Commons to impress upon the conscience and conviction of Parliament.

In 1866 Lord Derby came into power. Lord Derby had to consider the state of the country, and he resolved that in his opinion it was necessary to bring in a Reform Bill. We brought in a Reform Bill; we passed a Reform Bill. Our Reform Bill was a complete and comprehensive measure. We did vindicate the principles upon which enfranchisement and disfranchisement should take place; we did not abolish entirely the representation of any borough; we did successfully appeal to a certain class of boroughs to spare their surplusage of representation to supply the wants of the Constitution. We did do justice to the counties, by adding greatly to their direct representation and enfranchising the towns that had grown into importance since 1832. We did issue a Boundary Commission, that has been and is now examining the Parliamentary bound-

daries in every part of the kingdom. And, fifth and lastly, we did establish a suffrage for the boroughs founded on the principle of rating; and then I am told, when measures recommended to the country during seven years have been so triumphantly carried into effect, that we have done nothing, that it is our opponents who have suggested the Bill.

It may be said, you have established a democratic government in England, because you have established household suffrage, and you have gone much further than the measures which you previously opposed. Well, now let us see if there is anything in that. Now, I am not at all prepared to admit that household suffrage, with the constitutional conditions upon which we have established it—namely, residence and rating—has established a democratic government. But it is unnecessary to enter into that consideration, because we have not established household suffrage in England. There are, I think I may say, probably four million houses in England. Under our ancient laws, and under the Act of Lord Grey, about a million of those householders possess the franchise. Under the new Act of 1867, something more than 500,000 will be added to that million. Well, then, I want to know if there are four million householders, and a million and a half in round numbers have the suffrage, how can household suffrage be said to be established in England?

I say Lord Derby could not have fixed upon any other solution of the question of the franchise than the one that he did. Remember that every degradation of the franchise—I used the term first—I don't shrink from it: it is correct language¹—I say that whatever degradation of value you make, whether it be 8*l.*, or 7*l.*, or 6*l.*, or 5*l.*, you are equally far from a principle and a settlement. Why, what was the reason all these Reform Bills failed? How is it—a thing utterly unknown in the history of this country—how is it that five Prime Ministers consecutively failed upon a question? Look to the history of the country. Those who live rapidly, in a rapid age, don't stop to think. But think of five Prime Ministers—the wisest men in the country—the prime and chief men in

¹ The word of course means 'lowering by one or more steps.'

the country, representing all the great parties, failing consecutively in settling a question. There must be some cause why they failed. The cause was this. Every independent man in the House of Commons, Tory and Radical alike, felt there was no permanent settlement in any of these schemes because there was no principle in them. When you try to settle any great question, there are two considerations which statesmen ought not to forget. And, first of all, let your plan be founded upon some principle. But that is not enough. Let it also be a principle that is in harmony with the manners and custom of the people you are attempting to legislate for. Now, I say, when you come to this question of the suffrage for boroughs, there is a principle in saying a man shall have a vote who has, by his residence and his contribution to local taxation, proved that he is interested in the welfare of his community. That man is a man whom you may trust in preference to a migratory pauper. That is a principle, and then, if you can apply that principle in harmony with the manners and customs of your country, then I say that you have a chance of a solution—a happy solution—of a great question. When you find it was an old custom of the country that the householder should possess this suffrage—that the man who, by his residence and his rate, proved he was one who on an average might fairly be looked upon as a responsible and trustworthy individual, you had your principle, and you had your traditional practice to consecrate your principle. A rating and residential borough franchise was not new even in modern times. It had been tried in the Municipal Act, and for many years with great success. Men were not elected under it hostile to the institutions of the country, excellent measures of public improvement were passed. True it is, after many years' trial, the elections under the Municipal Act have become in many instances corrupt and unsatisfactory. But the Committee of the House of Lords that has investigated the subject, in their Report drawn up by Lord Grey, attribute all these evil consequences to an alteration in the law, which allows men now to vote without the condition of personal payment of rates. Well, then, I say that in these circumstances the measure which we have carried was

the only measure which could have been passed. And that seems now to be universally acknowledged, even by those who complain that we have been successful.

There is one other point which I must notice. I speak of an animal not known in Scotland, and, thank God, no longer known in England—the compound householder. The compound householder is a being who wants a vote without paying rates. Well, that we opposed. Nothing in the world would induce us to consent to any man having a vote who did not personally pay his rates, and I believe that is a sound principle. If we had attempted to do away with the compound householder when Parliament first met, we should have had all the vestries of London agitating the country; and Mr. Gladstone himself, quite contemplating our difficulties, had announced that the laws under which compound householding existed were the result of the civilisation of the age. But as the thing went on, we got a little stronger, and matters were more understood; and months afterwards the Liberal party themselves proposed to do away with the great result of civilisation. What was our obvious course? We had insisted that no man should vote who did not pay rates. We had sympathised with the compound householder by having prepared clauses by which his vote might be facilitated, and if he chose to come forward, and commit suicide, and say, ‘I will no longer be a compound householder, but I will give up these privileges and pay rates, what was our duty? It would have been most inconsistent in us to resist such a proposal. I say that the compound householder bowing down, and giving up his peculiar position, and saying, ‘In order to exercise the suffrage I will pay the rate,’ was the very triumph of the principle of our Bill. So there was an end of the compound householder, but the benefit did not rest there. That decision will restore the municipal elections to their primitive order and purity, for it was the admission of the compound householder to the suffrage which disordered and degraded our corporation elections.

And now, my lords and gentlemen, you have, by what I have told you, some notion of what a speech in detail is in the House of Commons. There must be considerable zeal for party

to induce you to listen with so much attention to a narrative of this description, and yet is it not expedient that statements of this kind should be made by those who, however unworthily, occupy great positions upon these questions, especially when, week after week, and month after month, the enormous nonsense that you have listened to has been circulated through the country? and therefore I think that, as you have been so kind to me as to ask me to be your guest and offer me your congratulations, and your encouragement for the work that I have done, my observations are not altogether out of place. I think I have shown to you, if you will allow me briefly to summarise what I have said, that we were perfectly justified as a party in dealing with this question, that it ought to be dealt with, and that we have dealt with it in a proper manner. I think I have shown to you that the story that we have democratised the country by establishing household suffrage is a fable. I think I have shown to you that the assertion that we have misled and betrayed our friends by giving up all securities that were talked of, is unfounded, and that we have carried on our Bill on the principle upon which we always insisted. But if I am right in this assertion, pardon some feeling on my part when I remember that it is in consequence of my conduct—in consequence of our unprincipled withdrawal of those securities, and the betrayal of our friends, who insisted upon being betrayed—that I miss to-day the presence of one of my oldest and most valued friends.¹ I should like to have been welcomed by his cordial heart, and by that ripe scholarship which no one appreciates more than myself. He has commemorated the withdrawal of his confidence in a letter which, strange to say, has not a quotation. I picture him to my self at this moment in the castellated shades of Thuro, with the 'Edinburgh Review' on one side, and on the other the Conservative surrender. He who has written the summary of the session in the 'Edinburgh,' is not mounted on the hery barb of Francis Jeffrey, he is rather placed upon a prancing horse, with which he consummates the entombment of Whig

¹ Mr Tollemache Sechair now Sir J. Tollemache Sechair of Thuro Castle

principles. The Conservative surrender—to borrow an expression from the pleasing volume of art of my friend the chairman¹—is what one would call a *replica*. You have had the subject treated in speeches, in articles, in reviews, and sometimes in manifestoes. The colouring is not without charm, but the drawing is inaccurate, the perspective is false, the subject is monotonous. Far be it from me to discover a man from his style. The wittiest of poets has commemorated for ever the character who knows you under these circumstances.² If, therefore, I make an observation on the ‘Conservative Surrender,’ it is founded entirely on abstract principles. I should say that article was written by a very clever man who has made a very great mistake. The leaders of the Conservative party are traitors; the Conservative party are false. They do not know that they have been abused; they have not recognised that their confidence has been betrayed and outraged.

I see many gentlemen here who have been, no doubt, inspectors like myself, as magistrates, of peculiar asylums, who meet there some cases which I have always thought at the same time the most absurd and the most distressing—it is when the lunatic believes all the world is mad, and that he himself is sane. But to pass from such gloomy imagery, really these ‘Edinburgh’ and ‘Quarterly Reviews,’ no man admires them more than myself. But I admire them as I do first-rate, first-class post-houses, which in old days, for half a century or so—to use a Manchester phrase—carried on a roaring trade. Then there comes some revolution or progress which no person can ever have contemplated. They find things are altered. They do not understand them, and instead of that intense competition and mutual vindictiveness which before distinguished them, they suddenly quite agree. The ‘boots’ of the ‘Blue Boar’ and the chambermaid of the ‘Red Lion’ embrace, and are quite in accord in this—in denouncing the infamy of railroads.

With regard to the question of education—ever since I

¹ Sir William Stirling Maxwell.

² Poor guiltless I, and can I choose but smile

When every coxcomb knows me by my style?

Pope, Prologue to the *Satires*, 281- .

have been in public life I have done everything I possibly could to promote the cause of the education of the people generally. I have done so because I have always felt that with the limited population of this United Kingdom, compared with the great imperial position which it occupies with reference to other nations, it is not only our duty, but it is an absolute necessity, that we should study to make every man the most effective being that education can possibly constitute him. In the old wars there used to be a story that one Englishman could beat three members of some other nation: but I think if we want to maintain our power we ought to make one Englishman equal really in the business of life to three other men that any other nation can furnish. I do not see how otherwise, with our limited population, we can fulfil the great destiny that I believe waits us, and the great position we occupy. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, whether it be a far greater advanced system of primary education—whether it be that system of competitive examination which I have ever supported, though I am not unconscious of some pedantry with which it is accompanied, or whatever may be the circumstances, I shall ever be its supporter.

May I be allowed to say, in reference to the subject of education generally, that the issue that has been raised is in a certain sense a false issue; but as it touches very great principles and affects the character of the nation, I would say myself I do not believe that in this United Kingdom any monotonous form of education, founded on a compulsory principle of forcing every part of the country to adopt the same system, will be successful. I am not prepared at this moment to agree that the same system ought to be extended to every part of Her Majesty's dominions, and to admit that the British nation generally is an uneducated one. So far as our primary education is concerned, there is no doubt that the multiplicity of our occupations and the value of labour has prevented that complete education in a primary sense which is to be desired. But if you look even to our primary education as compared with the primary education of other countries for the last thirty years, though it may not reach in some respects the alleged points

which other nations have accomplished, still, on the whole, during these thirty years the advance of England has been greatest. But I deny that the education of the people of England entirely depends—I am talking now of the general population—on our system of primary education. I say that the technical education of the English artisan—especially since what we may describe as the Albertine movement took place—since Prince Albert first laid down those principles and doctrines which have been carried into felicitous effect—the technical education of the English artisan has been immensely improved. But if you come to mere secular education, there is an influence prevalent in England which exists in no other country, and which forms in a very great degree the character and conduct of the English people, and that is the influence of a free press. That influence is never considered. The press of this country, conducted by whatever party, but, on the whole, conducted with great knowledge, with great intelligence, and with a high moral feeling, imparts a secular education to the people of this country which none of the boasted countries which are brought forward as models, and which we are called upon to make great efforts to equal, can for a moment compete with.

Gentlemen, I cannot deny that the great measure which has been passed this year will give in some degree a new character to the Constitution, and introduce some new powers and influences into its play and action. Indeed, to accomplish these ends was the object of those who brought it forward. I am told, at least I hear every day, that in consequence of the change which has been effected one must expect great questions to arise. Well, great questions no doubt will arise, and I shall be very sorry if great questions should not arise. Great questions are a proof that a country is progressing. In a progressive country change is constant; and the great question is, not whether you should resist change which is inevitable, but whether that change should be carried out in deference to the manners, the customs, the laws, and the traditions of a people, or whether it should be carried out in deference to abstract principles, and arbitrary and general doctrines. The one is a national system; the other, to give it an epithet, a noble

epithet—which, perhaps, it may deserve—is a philosophic system. Both have great advantages: the national party is supported by the fervour of patriotism, the philosophical party has a singular exemption from the force of prejudice.

Now, my lords and gentlemen, I have always considered that the Tory party was the national party of England. It is not formed of a combination of oligarchs and philosophers who practise on the sectarian prejudices of a portion of the people. It is formed of all classes, from the highest to the most homely, and it upholds a series of institutions that are in theory, and ought to be in practice, an embodiment of the national requirements and the security of the national rights. Whenever the Tory party degenerates into an oligarchy, it becomes unpopular, whenever the national institutions do not fulfil their original intention, the Tory party becomes odious, but when the people are led by their natural leaders, and when, by their united influence, the national institutions fulfil their original intention, the Tory party is triumphant, and then, under Providence, will secure the prosperity and the power of the country.

My lords and gentlemen, the times in which we happen to meet are no doubt serious. At this moment events may be occurring which may influence the destiny of Europe, and affect the position of this country. But, no doubt, whatever ministry may have to regulate the fortunes of this country, whatever may be their abilities, whatever may be the favouring circumstances they can command, they are nothing without the confidence of the great body of the nation. I am the last man who would for a moment affect to depreciate the difficulties which a British minister has now to meet, or would attempt for a moment to exaggerate the qualities which I, or even my colleagues better than myself, possess to encounter them. Indeed, when I remember the elements and interests of the British Isles, so vast, so various, and so complicated, when I even call to recollection the difference of race which, however blended, leaves significant characteristics, when I recollect that the great majority of the population of the United Kingdom rise every day and depend for their subsistence—their daily subsistence—on their daily labour, when I recollect the delicate

marvel of our credit—more wonderful, in my opinion, than our accumulated capital—the constant collision between those ancient institutions that give permanency to the State, and the requirements of the new populations that arise, and which they do not completely or adequately meet—when I remember that it is upon the common sense, the prudence, and the courage of the community thus circumstanced that depends the fate of uncounted millions in Asian provinces, and that around the globe there is a circle of domestic settlements that watch us for example and inspiration—when I know that not a sun rises upon a British minister that does not bring him care, and often inexpressible anxiety—some unexpected war, a disturbed or discontented colony, a pestilence, a famine, a mutiny, a collapse of credit, a declining trade, a decaying revenue, perhaps some insensate and fantastic conspiracy, I declare I often wonder where is the strength of thought and the fund of feeling that are adequate to cope with such colossal circumstances. But when I withdraw from the pressure of individual interests, and take a larger and deeper view of human affairs, I recognise that in this country, whatever may have been the tumult and the turmoil of now many generations, there have ever been three master influences that have at all times guided and controlled all other powers and passions. And these are Industry, Liberty, and Religion. So long as this sacred combination influences the destiny of this country it will not die. History will recognise its life, not record its decline and fall. It will say—This is a great and understanding people, and it is from such materials we make the magnificence of nations and establish the splendour of terrestrial thrones.

CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES

Speech at Manchester, April 3, 1872

[The gist of this speech lies in the one sentence, 'The programme of the Conservative party is to maintain the institutions of the country' We have then an exhaustive consideration of the various component parts of that constitution, and the advantages of each. Some remarks on the union of Church and State follow, then comes the condition of the people, both agricultural and manufacturing, with some reference to the doctrines of Fenianism, and the speech concludes with a description of the ministry and their conduct of foreign affairs, which, whatever its justice, will long be remembered for its felicitous imagery and biting satire.]

It must be remembered that in the November of 1871 Sir Charles Dilke had delivered a lecture at Newcastle on the cost of Royalty, containing statements which he afterwards retracted.]

THE right honourable gentleman said Gentlemen, the Chairman has correctly reminded you that this is not the first time that my voice has sounded in this hall. But that was an occasion very different from that which now assembles us together—was nearly thirty years ago, when I endeavoured to support and stimulate the flagging energies of an institution in which I thought there were the germs of future refinement and intellectual advantage to the rising generation of Manchester, and since I have been here on this occasion I have learnt with much gratification that it is now counted among your most flourishing institutions. There was also another and more recent occasion when the gracious office fell to me to distribute among the members of the Mechanics' Institution those prizes which they had gained through their study in letters and in science. Gentlemen, these were pleasing offices, and if life consisted only of such offices you would not have to

complain of it. But life has its masculine duties, and we are assembled here to fulfil some of the most important of these, when, as citizens of a free country, we are assembled together to declare our determination to maintain, to uphold the Constitution to which we are debtors, in our opinion, for our freedom and our welfare.

Gentlemen, there seems at first something incongruous that one should be addressing the population of so influential and intelligent a county as Lancashire who is not locally connected with them, and, gentlemen, I will frankly admit that this circumstance did for a long time make me hesitate in accepting your cordial and generous invitation. But, gentlemen, after what occurred yesterday, after receiving more than 200 addresses from every part of this great county, after the welcome which then greeted me, I feel that I should not be doing justice to your feelings, I should not do duty to myself, if I any longer considered my presence here to-night to be an act of presumption. Gentlemen, though it may not be an act of presumption, it still is, I am told, an act of great difficulty. Our opponents assure us that the Conservative party have no political programme; and, therefore, they must look with much satisfaction to one whom you honour to-night by considering him the leader and representative of your opinions when he comes forward, at your invitation, to express to you what that programme is. The Conservative party are accused of having no programme of policy. If by a programme is meant a plan to despoil churches and plunder landlords, I admit we have no programme. If by a programme is meant a policy which assails or menaces every institution and every interest, every class and every calling in the country, I admit we have no programme. But if to have a policy with distinct ends, and these such as most deeply interest the great body of the nation, be a becoming programme for a political party, then, I contend, we have an adequate programme, and one which, here or elsewhere, I shall always be prepared to assert and to vindicate.

Gentlemen, the programme of the Conservative party is to maintain the Constitution of the country. I have not come down to Manchester to deliver an essay on the English Con-

stitution; but when the banner of Republicanism is unfurled—when the fundamental principles of our institutions are controverted—I think, perhaps, it may not be inconvenient that I should make some few practical remarks upon the character of our Constitution—upon that monarchy, limited by the co-ordinate authority of Estates of the realm, which, under the title of Queen, Lords and Commons, has contributed so greatly to the prosperity of this country, and with the maintenance of which I believe that prosperity is bound up

Gentlemen, since the settlement of that Constitution, now nearly two centuries ago, England has never experienced a revolution, though there is no country in which there has been so continuous and such considerable change. How is this? Because the wisdom of your forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of human passions. Whatever the struggle of parties, whatever the strife of factions, whatever the excitement and exaltation of the public mind, there has always been something in this country round which all classes and parties could rally, representing the majesty of the law, the administration of justice, and involving, at the same time, the security for every man's rights and the fountain of honour. Now, gentlemen, it is well clearly to comprehend what is meant by a country not having a revolution for two centuries. It means, for that space, the unbroken exercise and enjoyment of the ingenuity of man. It means, for that space, the continuous application of the discoveries of science to his comfort and convenience. It means the accumulation of capital, the elevation of labour, the establishment of those admirable factories which cover your district, the unwearied improvement of the cultivation of the land, which has extracted from a somewhat churlish soil harvests more exuberant than those furnished by lands nearer to the sun. It means the continuous order which is the only parent of personal liberty and political right. And you owe all this, gentlemen, to the Throne.

There is another powerful and most beneficial influence which is also exercised by the Crown. Gentlemen, I am a party man. I believe that, without party, Parliamentary government is impossible. I look upon Parliamentary govern-

ment as the noblest government in the world, and certainly the one most suited to England. But without the discipline of political connection, animated by the principle of private honour, I feel certain that a popular Assembly would sink before the power or the corruption of a minister. Yet, gentlemen, I am not blind to the faults of party government. It has one great defect. Party has a tendency to warp the intelligence, and there is no minister, however resolved he may be in treating a great public question, who does not find some difficulty in emancipating himself from the traditional prejudice on which he has long acted. It is, therefore, a great merit in our Constitution that before a minister introduces a measure to Parliament, he must submit it to an intelligence superior to all party, and entirely free from influences of that character.

I know it will be said, gentlemen, that, however beautiful in theory, the personal influence of the Sovereign is now absorbed in the responsibility of the minister. Gentlemen, I think you will find there is great fallacy in this view. The principles of the English Constitution do not contemplate the absence of personal influence on the part of the Sovereign; and if they did, the principles of human nature would prevent the fulfilment of such a theory. Gentlemen, I need not tell you that I am now making on this subject abstract observations of general application to our institutions and our history. But take the case of a Sovereign of England who accedes to his throne at the earliest age the law permits and who enjoys a long reign—take an instance like that of George III. From the earliest moment of his accession that Sovereign is placed in constant communication with the most able statesmen of the period, and of all parties. Even with average ability it is impossible not to perceive that such a Sovereign must soon attain a great mass of political information and political experience. Information and experience, gentlemen, whether they are possessed by a Sovereign or by the humblest of his subjects, are irresistible in life. No man with the vast responsibility that devolves upon an English minister can afford to treat with indifference a suggestion that has not occurred to him, or information with which he had not been previously supplied.

But, gentlemen, pursue this view of the subject. The longer the reign, the influence of that Sovereign must proportionately increase. All the illustrious statesmen who served his youth disappear. A new generation of public servants rises up. There is a critical conjuncture in affairs—a moment of perplexity and peril. Then it is that the Sovereign can appeal to a similar state of affairs that occurred perhaps thirty years before. When all are in doubt among his servants he can quote the advice that was given by the illustrious men of his early years, and though he may maintain himself within the strictest limits of the Constitution, who can suppose when such information and such suggestions are made by the most exalted person in the country that they can be without effect? No, gentlemen, a minister who could venture to treat such influence with indifference would not be a Constitutional minister, but an arrogant idiot.

Gentlemen, the influence of the Crown is not confined merely to political affairs. England is a domestic country. Here the home is revered and the hearth is sacred. The nation is represented by a family—the Royal Family, and if that family is educated with a sense of responsibility and a sentiment of public duty, it is difficult to exaggerate the salutary influence they may exercise over a nation. It is not merely an influence upon manners; it is not merely that they are a model for refinement and for good taste—they affect the heart as well as the intelligence of the people, and in the hour of public adversity, or in the anxious conjuncture of public affairs, the nation rallies round the Family and the Throne, and its spirit is animated and sustained by the expression of public affection.

Gentlemen, there is yet one other remark that I would make upon our monarchy, though, had it not been for recent circumstances, I should have refrained from doing so. An attack has recently been made upon the Throne on account of the costliness of the institution. Gentlemen, I shall not dwell upon the fact that if the people of England appreciate the monarchy, as I believe they do, it would be painful to them that their Royal and representative family should not be maintained with becoming dignity, or fill in the public eye a position inferior

to some of the nobles of the land. Nor will I insist upon what is unquestionably the fact, that the revenues of the Crown estates, on which our Sovereign might live with as much right as the Duke of Bedford or the Duke of Northumberland has to his estates, are now paid into the public exchequer. All this, upon the present occasion, I am not going to insist upon. What I now say is this, that there is no sovereignty of any first-rate State which costs so little to the people as the sovereignty of England. I will not compare our Civil List with those of European empires, because it is known that in amount they treble and quadruple it; but I will compare it with the cost of sovereignty in a republic, and that a republic with which you are intimately acquainted—the republic of the United States of America.

Gentlemen, there is no analogy between the position of our Sovereign, Queen Victoria, and that of the President of the United States. The President of the United States is not the Sovereign of the United States. There is a very near analogy between the position of the President of the United States and that of the Prime Minister of England, and both are paid at much the same rate—the income of a second-class professional man. The Sovereign of the United States is the people; and I will now show you what the sovereignty of the United States costs. Gentlemen, you are aware of the Constitution of the United States. There are 37 independent States, each with a sovereign legislature. Besides these, there is a Confederation of States to conduct their external affairs, which consists of a House of Representatives and a Senate. There are 285 members of the House of Representatives, and there are 74 members of the Senate, making altogether 359 members of Congress. Now each member of Congress receives 1,000*l.* sterling per annum. In addition to this he receives an allowance called ‘mileage,’ which varies according to the distance which he travels, but the aggregate cost of which is about 30,000*l.* per annum. That makes 389,000*l.*, almost the exact amount of our Civil List.

But this, gentlemen, will allow you to make only a very imperfect estimate of the cost of sovereignty in the United

States. Every member of every Legislature in the 37 States is also paid. There are, I believe, 5,010 members of State Legislatures who receive about \$350 per annum each. As some of the returns are imperfect, the average which I have given of expenditure may be rather high, and therefore I have not counted the 'mileage,' which is also universally allowed. 5,010 members of State Legislatures at \$350 each make \$1,753,500, or 350,700*l.* sterling a year. So you see, gentlemen, that the immediate expenditure for the sovereignty of the United States is between 700,000*l.* and 800,000*l.* a year. Gentlemen, I have not time to pursue this interesting theme, otherwise I could show you that you have still but imperfectly ascertained the cost of sovereignty in a republic. But, gentlemen, I cannot resist giving you one further illustration.

The government of this country is considerably carried on by the aid of Royal Commissions. So great is the increase of public business that it would be probably impossible for a minister to carry on affairs without this assistance. The Queen of England can command for these objects the services of the most experienced statesmen, and men of the highest position in society. If necessary, she can summon to them distinguished scholars or men most celebrated in science and in art: and she receives from them services that are unpaid. They are only too proud to be described in the Commission as Her Majesty's 'trusty councillors;' and if any member of these Commissions performs some transcendent services, both of thought and of labour, he is munificently rewarded by a public distinction conferred upon him by the *Fountain of Honour*. Gentlemen, the Government of the United States, has, I believe, not less availed itself of the services of Commissions than the Government of the United Kingdom; but, in a country where there is no *Fountain of Honour*, every member of these Commissions is paid.

Gentlemen, I trust I have now made some suggestions to you respecting the monarchy of England which at least may be so far serviceable that when we are separated they may not be altogether without advantage; and now, gentlemen, I would say something on the subject of the House of Lords. It is not

merely the authority of the Throne that is now disputed, but the character and influence of the House of Lords that are held up by some to public disregard. Gentlemen, I shall not stop for a moment to offer you any proofs of the advantage of a Second Chamber; and for this reason. That subject has been discussed now for a century, ever since the establishment of the Government of the United States, and all great authorities, American, German, French, Italian, have agreed in this, that a Representative Government is impossible without a Second Chamber. And it has been, especially of late, maintained by great political writers in all countries that the repeated failure of what is called the French Republic is mainly to be ascribed to its not having a Second Chamber.

But, gentlemen, however anxious foreign countries have been to enjoy this advantage, that anxiety has only been equalled by the difficulty which they have found in fulfilling their object. How is a Second Chamber to be constituted? By nominees of the sovereign power? What influence can be exercised by a Chamber of nominees? Are they to be bound by popular election? In what manner are they to be elected? If by the same constituency as the popular body, what claim have they, under such circumstances, to criticise or to control the decisions of that body? If they are to be elected by a more select body, qualified by a higher franchise, there immediately occurs the objection, why should the majority be governed by the minority? The United States of America were fortunate in finding a solution of this difficulty; but the United States of America had elements to deal with which never occurred before, and never probably will occur again, because they formed their illustrious Senate from the materials that were offered them by the thirty-seven States. We, gentlemen, have the House of Lords, an assembly which has historically developed and periodically adapted itself to the wants and necessities of the times.

What, gentlemen, is the first quality which is required in a Second Chamber? Without doubt, independence. What is the best foundation of independence? Without doubt, property. The Prime Minister of England has only recently told you, and I believe he spoke quite accurately, that the average income of

the members of the House of Lords is 20,000*l* per annum. Of course there are some who have more and some who have less, but the influence of a public assembly, so far as property is concerned, depends upon its aggregate property, which, in the present case, is a revenue of 9,000,000*l* a year. But, gentlemen, you must look to the nature of this property. It is visible property, and therefore it is responsible property, which every ratepayer in the room knows to his cost. But, gentlemen, it is not only visible property, it is, generally speaking, territorial property, and one of the elements of territorial property is that it is representative. Now, for illustration, suppose—which God forbid—there was no House of Commons, and any Englishman—I will take him from either end of the island—a Cumberland or a Cornish man, finds himself aggrieved. The Cumbrian says, ‘This conduct I experience is most unjust. I know a Cumberland man in the House of Lords, the Earl of Carlisle or the Earl of Lonsdale, I will go to him, he will never see a Cumberland man ill treated.’ The Cornish man will say, ‘I will go to the Lord of Port Eliot, his family have sacrificed themselves before this for the liberties of Englishmen, and he will get justice done me.’

But, gentlemen, the charge against the House of Lords is that the dignities are hereditary, and we are told that if we have a House of Peers they should be peers for life. There are great authorities in favour of this, and even my noble friend¹ near me the other day gave in his adhesion to a limited application of this principle. Now, gentlemen, in the first place let me observe that every peer is a peer for life, as he cannot be a peer after his death, but some peers for life are succeeded in their dignities by their children. The question arises, who is most responsible—a peer for life whose dignities are not descendible, or a peer for life whose dignities are hereditary? Now, gentlemen, a peer for life is in a very strong position. He says, ‘Here I am, I have got power and I will exercise it.’ I have no doubt that, on the whole, a peer for life would exercise it for what he deemed was the public good. Let us hope that. But, after all, he might and could exercise it according

¹ Lord Derby

to his own will. Nobody can call him to account; he is independent of everybody. But a peer for life whose dignities descend is in a very different position. He has every inducement to study public opinion, and, when he believes it just, to yield; because he naturally feels that if the order to which he belongs is in constant collision with public opinion, the chances are that his dignities will not descend to his posterity.

Therefore, gentlemen, I am not prepared myself to believe that a solution of any difficulties in the public mind on this subject is to be found by creating peers for life. I know there are some philosophers who believe that the best substitute for the House of Lords would be an assembly formed of ex-Governors of Colonies. I have not sufficient experience on that subject to give a decided opinion upon it. When the Muse of Comedy threw her frolic grace over society, a retired Governor was generally one of the characters in every comedy; and the last of our great actors—who, by the by, was a great favourite at Manchester—Mr. Farren, was celebrated for his delineation of the character in question. Whether it be the recollection of that performance or not, I confess I am inclined to believe that an English gentleman—born to business, managing his own estate, administering the affairs of his county, mixing with all classes of his fellow-men, now in the hunting field, now in the Railway Direction, unaffected, unostentatious, proud of his ancestors, if they have contributed to the greatness of our common country—is, on the whole, more likely to form a senator agreeable to English opinion and English taste than any substitute that has yet been produced.

Gentlemen, let me make one observation more, on the subject of the House of Lords, before I conclude. There is some advantage in political experience. I remember the time when there was a similar outcry against the House of Lords, but much more intense and powerful; and, gentlemen, it arose from the same cause. A Liberal Government had been installed in office, with an immense Liberal majority. They proposed some violent measures. The House of Lords modified some, delayed others, and some they threw out. Instantly there was a cry to abolish or to reform the House of Lords, and

the greatest popular orator¹ that probably ever existed was sent on a pilgrimage over England to excite the people in favour of this opinion. What happened? That happened, gentlemen, which may happen to-morrow. There was a dissolution of Parliament. The great Liberal majority vanished. The balance of parties was restored. It was discovered that the House of Lords had been behind them at least half of the English people. We heard no more cries for their abolition or their reform, and before two years more passed England was really governed by the House of Lords, under the wise influence of the Duke of Wellington and the commanding eloquence of Lyndhurst; and such was the enthusiasm of the nation in favour of the Second Chamber that at every public meeting its health was drunk, with the additional sentiment, for which we are indebted to one of the most distinguished members that ever represented the House of Commons, 'Thank God, there is the House of Lords.'

Gentlemen, you will perhaps not be surprised that, having made some remarks upon the Monarchy and the House of Lords, I should say something respecting that House in which I have literally passed the greater part of my life and to which I am devotedly attached. It is not likely, therefore, that I should say anything to depreciate the legitimate position and influence of the House of Commons. Gentlemen, it is said that the diminished power of the Throne and the assailed authority of the House of Lords are owing to the increased power of the House of Commons, and the new position which of late years, and especially during the last forty years, it has assumed in the English Constitution. Gentlemen, the main power of the House of Commons depends upon its command over the public purse and its control of the public expenditure; and if that power is possessed by a party which has a large majority in the House of Commons, the influence of the House of Commons is proportionately increased, and, under some circumstances, becomes more predominant. But, gentlemen, this power of the House of Commons is not a power which has been created by any Reform Act, from the days of Lord Grey in 1832 to 1867. It is the power which the House of Commons has enjoyed for

centuries—which it has frequently asserted and sometimes even tyrannically exercised. Gentlemen, the House of Commons represents the constituencies of England, and I am here to show you that no addition to the elements of that constituency has placed the House of Commons in a different position with regard to the Throne and the House of Lords from that it has always constitutionally occupied.

Gentlemen, we speak now on this subject with great advantage. We recently have had published authentic documents upon this matter which are highly instructive. We have, for example, just published the Census of Great Britain, and we are now in possession of the last registration of voters for the United Kingdom. Gentlemen, it appears that by the census the population at this time is about 32,000,000. It is shown by the last registration that, after making the usual deductions for deaths, removals, double entries, and so on, the constituency of the United Kingdom may be placed at 2,200,000. So, gentlemen, it at once appears that there are 30,000,000 people in this country who are as much represented by the House of Lords as by the House of Commons, and who, for the protection of their rights, must depend upon them and the majesty of the Throne. And now, gentlemen, I will tell you what was done by the last Reform Act.

Lord Grey, in his measure of 1832, which was no doubt a statesmanlike measure, committed a great and for a time it appeared an irretrievable error. By that measure he fortified the legitimate influence of the aristocracy; and accorded to the middle classes great and salutary franchises; but he not only made no provision for the representation of the working classes in the Constitution, but he absolutely abolished those ancient franchises which the working classes had peculiarly enjoyed and exercised from time immemorial. Gentlemen, that was the origin of Chartism, and of that electoral uneasiness which existed in this country more or less for thirty years. The Liberal party, I feel it my duty to say, had not acted fairly by this question. In their adversity they held out hopes to the working classes, but when they had a strong Government they laughed their vows to scorn. In 1848 there was a French

Revolution and a Republic was established. No one can have forgotten what the effect was in this country. I remember the day when not a woman could leave her house in London, and when cannon were planted on Westminster Bridge. When Lord Derby became Prime Minister affairs had arrived at such a point that it was of the first moment that the question should be sincerely dealt with. He had to encounter great difficulties, but he accomplished his purpose with the support of a united party. And, gentlemen, what has been the result? A year ago there was another revolution in France, and a Republic was again established of the most menacing character. What happened in this country? You could not get half a dozen men to assemble in a street and grumble. Why? Because the people had got what they wanted. They were content and they were grateful.

But, gentlemen, the Constitution of England is not merely a Constitution in State, it is a Constitution in Church and State. The wisest Sovereigns and statesmen have ever been anxious to connect authority with religion—some to increase their power, some, perhaps, to mitigate its exercise. But the same difficulty has been experienced in effecting this union which has been experienced in forming a Second Chamber—either the spiritual power has usurped upon the civil and established a sacerdotal society, or the civil power has invaded successfully the rights of the spiritual, and the ministers of religion have been degraded into stipendiaries of the State and instruments of the Government. In England we accomplish this great result by an alliance between Church and State, between two originally independent powers. I will not go into the history of that alliance, which is rather a question for those archaeological societies which occasionally amuse and instruct the people of this city. Enough for me that this union was made and has contributed for centuries to the civilisation of this country. Gentlemen, there is the same assault against the Church of England and the union between the State and the Church as there is against the Monarchy and against the House of Lords. It is said that the existence of Nonconformity proves that the Church is a failure. I draw from these pro-

mises an exactly contrary conclusion ; and I maintain that to have secured a national profession of faith with the unlimited enjoyment of private judgment in matters spiritual is the solution of the most difficult problem, and one of the triumphs, of civilisation.

It is said that the existence of parties in the Church also proves its incompetence. On that matter, too, I entertain a contrary opinion. Parties have always existed in the Church ; and some have appealed to them as arguments in favour of its Divine institution, because, in the services and doctrines of the Church have been found representatives of every mood in the human mind. Those who are influenced by ceremonies find consolation in forms which secure to them 'the beauty of holiness.' Those who are not satisfied except with enthusiasm find in its ministrations the exaltation they require, while others who believe that 'the anchor of faith' can never be safely moored except in the dry sands of reason find a religion within the pale of the Church which can boast of its irrefragable logic and its irresistible evidence.

Gentlemen, I am inclined sometimes to believe that those who advocate the abolition of the union between Church and State have not carefully considered the consequences of such a course. The Church is a powerful corporation of many millions of Her Majesty's subjects, with a consummate organisation and wealth which in its aggregate is vast. Restricted and controlled by the State, so powerful a corporation may be only fruitful of public advantage, but it becomes a great question what might be the consequence of the severance of the controlling tie between these two bodies. The State would be enfeebled, but the Church would probably be strengthened. Whether that is a result to be desired is a grave question for all men. For my own part, I am bound to say that I doubt whether it would be favourable to the cause of civil and religious liberty. I know that there is a common idea that if the union between Church and State was severed, the wealth of the Church would revert to the State ; but it would be well to remember that the great proportion of ecclesiastical property is the property of individuals. Take, for example, the fact that the great mass of

Church patronage is patronage in the hands of private persons. That you could not touch without compensation to the patron. You have established that principle in your late Irish Bill, where there was very little patronage. And in the present state of the public mind on the subject, there is very little doubt that there would be scarcely a patron in England—irrespective of other aid the Church would receive—who would not dedicate his compensation to the spiritual wants of his neighbours.

It was computed some years ago that the property of the Church, in this manner if the union was terminated, would not be less than between 80,000,000*l.*, and 90,000,000*l.*; and since that period the amount of private property dedicated to the purposes of the Church has very largely increased. I therefore trust that when the occasion offers for the country to speak out, it will speak out in an unmistakable manner on this subject; and, recognising the inestimable services of the Church, that it will call upon the Government to maintain its union with the State. Upon this subject there is one remark I would make. Nothing is more surprising to me than the plea on which the present outcry is made against the Church of England. I could not believe that in the nineteenth century the charge against the Church of England should be that Churchmen, and especially the clergy, had educated the people. If I were to fix upon one circumstance more than another which redounded to the honour of Churchmen, it is, that they should fulfil this noble office; and, next to being 'the stewards of Divine mysteries,' I think the greatest distinction of the clergy is the admirable manner in which they have devoted their lives and their fortunes to this greatest of national objects.

Gentlemen, you are well acquainted in this city with this controversy. It was in this city—I don't know whether it was not in this hall—that that remarkable meeting was held of the Nonconformists to effect important alterations in the Education Act, and you are acquainted with the discussion in Parliament which arose in consequence of that meeting. Gentlemen, I have due and great respect for the Nonconformist body. I

acknowledge their services to their country, and though I believe that the political reasons which mainly called them into existence have entirely ceased, it is impossible not to treat with consideration a body which has been eminent for its conscience, its learning, and its patriotism; but I must express my mortification that, from a feeling of envy or of pique, the Nonconformist body, rather than assist the Church in their great enterprise, should absolutely have become the partisans of a merely secular education. I believe myself, gentlemen, that without the recognition of a superintending Providence in the affairs of this world all national education will be disastrous, and I feel confident that it is impossible to stop at that mere recognition. Religious education is demanded by the nation generally and by the instincts of human nature. I should like to see the Church and the Nonconformists work together; but I trust, whatever may be the result, the country will stand by the Church in its efforts to maintain the religious education of the people. Gentlemen, I foresee yet trials for the Church of England; but I am confident in its future. I am confident in its future because I believe there is now a very general feeling that to be national it must be comprehensive. I will not use the word 'broad,' because it is an epithet applied to a system with which I have no sympathy. But I would wish Churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our 'Father's Home there are many mansions,' and I believe that comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas without which I hold no practical religion can exist.

Gentlemen, I have now endeavoured to express to you my general views upon the most important subjects that can interest Englishmen. They are subjects upon which, in my mind, a man should speak with frankness and clearness to his countrymen, and although I do not come down here to make a party speech, I am bound to say that the manner in which those subjects are treated by the leading subject of this realm is to me most unsatisfactory. Although the Prime Minister of England is always writing letters and making speeches, and particularly on these topics, he seems to me ever to send forth an

'uncertain sound.' If a member of Parliament announces himself a Republican, Mr. Gladstone takes the earliest opportunity of describing him as 'a fellow worker' in public life. If an inconsiderate multitude calls for the abolition or reform of the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone says that it is no easy task, and that he must think once or twice, or perhaps even thrice, before he can undertake it. If your neighbour the member for Bradford, Mr. Mill, brings forward a motion in the House of Commons for the severance of Church and State, Mr. Gladstone assures Mr. Mill with the utmost courtesy that he believes the opinion of the House of Commons is against him; but that if Mr. Mill wishes to influence the House of Commons he must address the people out of doors; whereupon Mr. Mill immediately calls a public meeting, and alleges as its cause the advice he has just received from the Prime Minister.

But, gentlemen, after all, the test of political institutions is the condition of the country whose fortunes they regulate, and I do not mean to evade that test. You are the inhabitants of an island of no colossal size, which, geographically speaking, was intended by nature as the appendage of some Continental Empire—either of Gauls and Franks on the other side of the Channel, or of Teutons and Scandinavians beyond the German Sea. Such indeed, and for a long period, was your early history. You were invaded; you were pillaged and you were conquered; yet amid all these disgraces and vicissitudes there was gradually formed that English race which has brought about a very different state of affairs. Instead of being invaded, your land is proverbially the only 'inviolate land'—the inviolate land of the sage and free. Instead of being plundered, you have attracted to your shores all the capital of the world. Instead of being conquered, your flag floats on many waters, and your standard waves in either zone. It may be said that these achievements are due to the race that inhabited the land, and not to its institutions. Gentlemen, in political institutions are the embodied experiences of a race. You have established a society of classes which give vigour and variety to life. There is no class possesses a single exclusive privilege, and all are equal before the law. You possess a real aristocracy, open to all who

deserve to enter it. You have not merely a middle class, but a hierarchy of middle classes, in which every degree of wealth, refinement, industry, energy, and enterprise is duly represented.

And now, gentlemen, what is the condition of the great body of the people? In the first place, gentlemen, they have for centuries been in the full enjoyment of that which no other country in Europe has ever completely attained—complete rights of personal freedom. In the second place, there has been a gradual, and therefore a wise, distribution on a large scale of political rights. Speaking with reference to the industries of this great part of the country, I can personally contrast it with the condition of the working classes forty years ago. In that period they have attained two results—the raising of their wages and the diminution of their toil. Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilisers of man. That the working classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire have proved not unworthy of these boons may be easily maintained; but their progress and elevation have been during this interval wonderfully aided and assisted by three causes, which are not so distinctly attributable to their own energies. The first is the revolution in locomotion, which has opened the world to the working man, which has enlarged the horizon of his experience, increased his knowledge of nature and of art, and added immensely to the salutary recreation, amusement, and pleasure of his existence. The second cause is the cheap postage, the moral benefits of which cannot be exaggerated. And the third is that unshackled press which has furnished him with endless sources of instruction, information, and amusement.

Gentlemen, if you would permit me, I would now make an observation upon another class of the labouring population. This is not a civic assembly, although we meet in a city. That was for convenience, but the invitation which I received was to meet the county and all the boroughs of Lancashire; and I wish to make a few observations upon the condition of the agricultural labourer. That is a subject which now greatly attracts public attention. And, in the first place, to prevent any misconception, I beg to express my opinion that an agri-

cultural labourer has as much right to combine for the bettering of his condition as a manufacturing labourer or worker in metals. If the causes of his combination are natural—that is to say, if they arise from his own feelings and from the necessities of his own condition, the combination will end in results mutually beneficial to employers and employed. If, on the other hand, it is fictitious and he is acted upon by extraneous influences and extraneous ideas, the combination will produce, I fear, much loss and misery both to employers and employed; and after a time he will find himself in a similar or in a worse position.

Gentlemen, in my opinion the farmers of England, as a body, cannot afford to pay higher wages than they do, and those who will answer me by saying that they must find their ability by the deduction of rents are, I think, involving themselves with economic laws which may prove too difficult for them to cope with. The profits of a farmer are very moderate. The interest upon capital invested in land is the smallest that my property furnishes. The farmer will have his profits and the investor in land will have his interest, even though they may be obtained at the cost of changing the mode of the cultivation of the country. Gentlemen, I should deeply regret to see the tillage of this country reduced, and a recurrence to pasture take place. I should regret it principally on account of the agricultural labourers themselves. Their new friends call them Hodge, and describe them as a stolid race. I must say that, from my experience of them, they are sufficiently shrewd and open to reason. I would say to them with confidence, as the great Athenian said to the Spartan who rudely assailed him, ‘Strike, but hear me.’

First, a change in the cultivation of the soil of this country would be very injurious to the labouring class; and secondly, I am of opinion that that class instead of being stationary has made, if not as much progress as the manufacturing class, very considerable progress during the last forty years. Many persons write and speak about the agricultural labourer without a perfect knowledge of his condition as is desirable. They treat him always as a human being who in every part of the

country finds himself in an identical condition. Now, on the contrary there is no class of labourers in which there is greater variety of condition than that of the agricultural labourers. It changes from north to south, from east to west, and from county to county. It changes even in the same county, where there is an alteration of soil and of configuration. The hind in Northumberland is in a very different condition from the famous Dorsetshire labourer—the tiller of the soil in Lincolnshire is different from his fellow agriculturist in Sussex. What the effect of manufactures is upon the agricultural districts in their neighbourhood it would be presumption in me to dwell upon—your own experience must tell you whether the agricultural labourer in North Lancashire, for example, has had no rise in wages and no diminution in toil. Take the case of the Dorsetshire labourer—the whole of the agricultural labourers on the south-western coast of England for a very long period worked only half the time of the labourers in other parts of England, and received only half the wages.

In the experience of many, I dare say, who are here present, even thirty years ago a Dorsetshire labourer never worked after three o'clock in the day; and why? Because the whole of that part of England was demoralised by smuggling. No one worked after three o'clock in the day for a very good reason—because he had to work at night. No farmer allowed his team to be employed after three o'clock, because he reserved his horses to take his illicit cargo at night and carry it rapidly into the interior. Therefore, as the men were employed and remunerated otherwise, they got into a habit of half work and half play so far as the land was concerned, and when smuggling was abolished—and it has only been abolished for thirty years—these imperfect habits of labour continued, and do even now continue to a great extent. That is the origin of the condition of the agricultural labourer in the south-western part of England.

But now, gentlemen, I want to test the condition of the agricultural labourer generally; and I will take a part of England with which I am familiar, and can speak as to the accuracy of the facts—I mean the group described as the south-midland

counties. The conditions of labour there are the same, or pretty nearly the same, throughout. The group may be described as a strictly agricultural community, and they embrace a population of probably a million and a half. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that the improvement in their lot during the last forty years has been progressive and is remarkable. I attribute it to three causes. In the first place, the rise in their money wages is no less than fifteen per cent. The second great cause of their improvement is the almost total disappearance of excessive and exhausting toil, from the general introduction of machinery. I don't know whether I could get a couple of men who could, or, if they could, would thrash a load of wheat in my neighbourhood. The third great cause which has improved their condition is the very general, not to say universal, institution of allotment grounds. Now, gentlemen, when I find that this has been the course of affairs in our very considerable and strictly agricultural portion of the country, where there have been no exceptional circumstances, like smuggling, to degrade and demoralise the race, I cannot resist the conviction that the condition of the agricultural labourer, instead of being stationary, as we are constantly told by those not acquainted with them, has been one of progressive improvement, and that in those counties—and they are many—where the stimulating influence of a manufacturing neighbourhood acts upon the land, the general conclusion at which I arrive is that the agricultural labourer has had his share in the advance of national prosperity.

Gentlemen, I am not here to maintain that there is nothing to be done to increase the well-being of the working classes of this country, generally speaking. There is not a single class in the country which is not susceptible of improvement; and that makes the life and animation of our society. But in all we do we must remember, as my noble friend told them at Liverpool, that much depends upon the working classes themselves, and what I know of the working classes in Lancashire makes me sure that they will respond to this appeal. Most assuredly we are expected to exert sympathy between ourselves and them is a distinctive feature of the present day; and, in that I

place, no inconsiderable results may be obtained by judicious and prudent legislation. But, gentlemen, in attempting to legislate upon social matters the great object is to be practical—to have before us some distinct aims and some distinct means by which they can be accomplished.

Gentlemen, I think public attention as regards these matters ought to be concentrated upon sanitary legislation. That is a wide subject, and, if properly treated, comprises almost every consideration which has a just claim upon legislative interference. Pure air, pure water, the inspection of unhealthy habitations, the adulteration of food, these and many kindred matters may be legitimately dealt with by the Legislature; and I am bound to say the Legislature is not idle upon them; for we have at this time two important measures before Parliament on the subject. One—by a late colleague of mine, Sir Charles Adderley—is a large and comprehensive measure, founded upon a sure basis, for it consolidates all existing public Acts and improves them. A prejudice has been raised against that proposal, by stating that it interferes with the private Acts of the great towns. I take this opportunity of contradicting that. The Bill of Sir Charles Adderley does not touch the Acts of the great towns. It only allows them if they think fit to avail themselves of its new provisions.

The other measure, by the Government, is of a partial character. What it comprises is good, so far as it goes, but it shrinks from that bold consolidation of existing Acts which I think one of the great merits of Sir Charles Adderley's Bill, which permits us to become acquainted with how much may be done in favour of sanitary improvement by existing provisions. Gentlemen, I cannot impress upon you too strongly my conviction of the importance of the Legislature and society uniting together in favour of these important results. A great scholar and a great wit, 300 years ago, said that, in his opinion, there was a great mistake in the Vulgate, which as you all know is the Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, and that, instead of saying 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity'—*Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*—the wise and witty King really said *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*. Gentlemen, it is

impossible to overrate the importance of the subject. After all, the first consideration of a minister should be the health of the people. A land may be covered with historic trophies, with museums of science and galleries of art, with universities and with libraries, the people may be civilised and ingenious, the country may be even famous in the annals and action of the world, but, gentlemen, if the population every ten years decreases, and the stature of the race every ten years diminishes, the history of that country will soon be the history of the past.

Gentlemen, I said I had not come here to make a party speech. I have addressed you upon subjects of grave, and I will venture to believe of general, interest, but to be here and altogether silent upon the present state of public affairs would not be respectful to you, and, perhaps, on the whole, would be thought incongruous. Gentlemen, I cannot pretend that our position either at home or abroad is in my opinion satisfactory. At home, at a period of immense prosperity, with a people contented and naturally loyal, we find to our surprise the most extravagant doctrines professed and the fundamental principle of our most valuable institutions impugned, and that too by persons of some authority. Gentlemen, this startling inconsistency is accounted for, in my mind, by the circumstance under which the present Administration was formed. It is the first instance in my knowledge of a British Administration being avowedly formed on a principle of violence. It is unnecessary for me to remind you of the circumstances which preceded the formation of that Government. You were the principal scene and theatre of the development of statesmanship that then occurred. You witnessed the incubation of the portentous birth. You remember when you were informed that the policy to secure the prosperity of Ireland and the content of Irishmen was a policy of sacrilege and confiscation. Gentlemen, when Ireland was placed under the wise and able administration of Lord Abercorn, Ireland was prosperous, and I may say content. But there happened at that time a very peculiar conjuncture in politics. The civil war in America had just ceased, and a band of military adventurer—Pele Italians, and many Irishmen—concocted at New York a conspiracy to

invade Ireland, with the belief that the whole country would rise to welcome them. How that conspiracy was baffled—how those plots were confounded, I need not now remind you. For that we were mainly indebted to the eminent qualities of a great man who has just left us. You remember how the constituencies were appealed to to vote against the Government who had made so unfit an appointment as that of Lord Mayo to the Viceroyalty of India. It was by his great qualities when Secretary for Ireland, by his vigilance, his courage, his patience, and his perseverance that this conspiracy was defeated. Never was a minister better informed. He knew what was going on at New York just as well as what was going on in the city of Dublin.

When the Fenian conspiracy had been entirely put down, it became necessary to consider the policy which it was expedient to pursue in Ireland; and it seemed to us at that time that what Ireland required after all the excitement which it had experienced was a policy which should largely develop its material resources. There were one or two subjects of a different character, which, for the advantage of the State, it would have been desirable to have settled, if that could have been effected with a general concurrence of both the great parties in that country. Had we remained in office, that would have been done. But we were destined to quit it, and we quitted it without a murmur. The policy of our successors was different. Their specific was to despoil churches and plunder landlords, and what has been the result? Sedition rampant, treason thinly veiled, and whenever a vacancy occurs in the representation a candidate is returned pledged to the disruption of the realm. Her Majesty's new ministers proceeded in their career like a body of men under the influence of some delirious drug. Not satiated with the spoliation and anarchy of Ireland, they began to attack every institution and every interest, every class and calling in the country.

It is curious to observe their course. They took into hand the Army. What have they done? I will not comment on what they have done. I will historically state it, and leave you to draw the inference. So long as Constitutional England has

existed, there has been a jealousy among all classes against the existence of a standing army. As our Empire expanded, and the existence of a large body of disciplined troops became a necessity, every precaution was taken to prevent the danger to our liberties which a standing army involved. It was a first principle not to concentrate in the island any overwhelming number of troops, and a considerable portion was distributed in the colonies. Care was taken that the troops generally should be officered by a class of men deeply interested in the property and the liberties of England. So extreme was the jealousy that the relations between that once constitutional force, the militia, and the Sovereign were rigidly guarded, and it was carefully placed under local influences. All this is changed. We have a standing army of large amount, quartered and brigaded and encamped permanently in England, and fed by a considerable and constantly increasing Reserve. It will in due time be officered by a class of men eminently scientific, but with no relations necessarily with society; while the militia is withdrawn from all local influences, and placed under the immediate command of the Secretary of War. Thus, in the nineteenth century, we have a large standing army established in England, contrary to all the traditions of the land, and that by a Liberal Government, and with the warm acclamations of the Liberal party.

Let us look what they have done with the Admiralty. You remember, in this county especially, the denunciations of the profligate expenditure of the Conservative Government, and you have since had an opportunity of comparing it with the gentler burden of Liberal estimates. The Navy was not merely an instance of profligate expenditure, but of incompetent and inadequate management. A great revolution was promised in its administration. A gentleman,¹ almost unknown to English politics, was strangely preferred to one of the highest places in the councils of Her Majesty. He set to at his task with ruthless activity. The Consultative Council, under which Nelson had gained all his victories, was dissolved. The Secretaryship of the Admiralty, an office which exercised a complete supervision over every division of that great department—an office which

¹ Mr. Childers.

was to the Admiralty what the Secretary of State is to the kingdom, which, in the qualities which it required and the duties which it fulfilled was rightly a stepping-stone to the Cabinet, as in the instances of Lord Halifax, Lord Herbert, and many others—was reduced to absolute insignificance. Even the office of Control, which of all others required a position of independence, and on which the safety of the Navy mainly depended, was deprived of all its important attributes. For two years the Opposition called the attention of Parliament to these destructive changes, but Parliament and the nation were alike insensible. Full of other business, they could not give a thought to what they looked upon merely as captious criticism. It requires a great disaster to command the attention of England; and when the ‘Captain’ was lost, and when they had the detail of the perilous voyage of the ‘Megæra,’ then public indignation demanded a complete change in this renovating administration of the Navy.

And what has occurred? It is only a few weeks since that in the House of Commons I heard the naval statement made by a new First Lord,¹ and it consisted only of the rescinding of all the revolutionary changes of his predecessor, the mischief of every one of which during the last two years has been pressed upon the attention of Parliament and the country by that constitutional and necessary body the Opposition. Gentlemen, it will not do for me—considering the time I have already occupied, and there are still some subjects of importance that must be touched—to dwell upon any of the other similar topics of which there is a rich abundance. I doubt not there is in this hall more than one farmer who has been alarmed by the suggestion that his agricultural machinery should be taxed.² I doubt not there is in this hall more than one publican who remembers that last year an Act of Parliament was introduced to denounce him as a ‘sinner.’ I doubt not there are in this hall a widow and an orphan who remember the profligate proposition to plunder their lonely heritage.³

¹ Mr. Goschen.

² Suggested by Mr. Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

³ Allusion to the proposal for taxing charities.

But, gentlemen, as time advanced it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysms ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench the ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea.

But, gentlemen, there is one other topic on which I must touch. If the management of our domestic affairs has been founded upon a principle of violence, that certainly cannot be alleged against the management of our external relations. I know the difficulty of addressing a body of Englishmen on these topics. The very phrase 'foreign affairs' makes an Englishman convinced that I am about to treat of subjects with which he has no concern. Unhappily, the relations of England to the rest of the world, which are 'foreign affairs,' are the matters which most influence his lot. Upon them depends the increase or reduction of taxation. Upon them depends the enjoyment or the embarrassment of his industry. And yet, though so momentous are the consequences of the mismanagement of our foreign relations, no one thinks of them till the mischief occurs, and then it is found how the most vital consequences have been occasioned by mere inadvertence.

I will illustrate this point by two anecdotes. Since I have been in public life there has been for this country a great calamity and there is a great danger, and both might have been avoided. The calamity was the Crimean War. You know what were the consequences of the Crimean War—a great addition to your debt, an enormous addition to your taxation, a cost more precious than your treasure—the best blood of England. Half a million of men, I believe, perished in that great undertaking. Nor are the evil consequences of that war adequately described

by what I have said. All the disorders and disturbances of Europe, those immense armaments that are an incubus on national industry and the great obstacle to progressive civilisation, may be traced and justly attributed to the Crimean War. And yet the Crimean War need never have occurred. When Lord Derby acceded to office, against his own wishes, in 1852, the Liberal party most unconstitutionally forced him to dissolve Parliament at a certain time by stopping the supplies, or at least by limiting the period for which they were voted. There was not a single reason to justify that course, for Lord Derby had only accepted office, having once declined it, on the renewed application of his Sovereign. The country, at the dissolution, increased the power of the Conservative party, but did not give to Lord Derby a majority, and he had to retire from power. There was not the slightest chance of a Crimean War when we retired from office; but the Emperor of Russia, believing that the successor of Lord Derby was no enemy to Russian aggression in the East, commenced those proceedings, with the result of which you are familiar. I speak of what I know, not of what I believe, but of what I have evidence in my possession to prove—that the Crimean War would never have happened if Lord Derby had remained in office.¹

The great danger is the present state of our relations with the United States. When I acceded to office I did so, so far as regarded the United States of America, with some advantage. During the whole of the Civil War in America both my noble friend near me and I had maintained a strict and fair neutrality. This was fully appreciated by the Government of the United States, and they expressed their wish that with our aid the settlement of all differences between the two Governments should be accomplished. They sent here a plenipotentiary,² an honourable gentleman, very intelligent and possessing general confidence. My noble friend near me, with great ability, negotiated a treaty for the settlement of all these claims. He was the first minister who proposed to refer them to arbitration, and the treaty was signed by the American Government. It was

¹ So thought Mr. Cobden, see *Life*, by Mr. Morley, v. ii. p. 127.

² Mr. Reverdy Johnson.

signed, I think, on November 10th, on the eve of the dissolution of Parliament. The borough elections that first occurred proved what would be the fate of the ministry, and the moment they were known in America the American Government announced that Mr. Reverdy Johnson had mistaken his instructions, and they could not present the treaty to the Senate for its sanction—the sanction of which there had been previously no doubt.

But the fact is that, as in the case of the Crimean War, it was supposed that our successors would be favourable to Russian aggression, so it was supposed that by the accession to office of Mr. Gladstone and a gentleman you know well, Mr. Bright, the American claims would be considered in a very different spirit. How they have been considered is a subject which, no doubt, occupies deeply the minds of the people of Lancashire. Now, gentlemen, observe this—the question of the Black Sea involved in the Crimean War, the question of the American claims involved in our negotiations with Mr. Johnson, are the two questions that have again turned up, and have been the two great questions that have been under the management of his Government.

How have they treated them? Prince Gortschakoff, thinking he saw an opportunity, announced his determination to break from the Treaty of Paris, and terminate all the conditions hostile to Russia which had been the result of the Crimean War. What was the first movement on the part of our Government is at present a mystery. Thus we know, that they selected the most rising diplomatist¹ of the day, and sent him to Prince Bismarck with a declaration that the policy of Russia, if persisted in, was war with England. Now, gentlemen, there was not the slightest chance of Russia going to war with England, and no necessity, as I shall always maintain, of England going to war with Russia. I believe I am not wrong in stating that the Russian Government were prepared to withdraw from the position they had rashly taken, but suddenly Her Majesty's Government, to use a technical phrase, threw over the plenipotentiary, and, instead of threatening war if the Treaty of Paris was violated, they agreed to arrangements by which the violation

¹ Mr. Odell.

of that treaty should be sanctioned by England, and, in the form of a congress, they showed themselves guaranteeing their own humiliation.

That Mr. Odo Russell made no mistake is quite obvious, because he has since been selected to be Her Majesty's ambassador at the most important Court of Europe.¹ Gentlemen, what will be the consequence of this extraordinary weakness on the part of the British Government it is difficult to foresee. Already we hear that Sebastopol is to be re-fortified, nor can any man doubt that the entire command of the Black Sea will soon be in the possession of Russia. The time may not be distant when we may hear of the Russian Power in the Persian Gulf, and what effect that may have upon the dominions of England and upon those possessions on the productions of which you every year more and more depend, are questions upon which it will be well for you on proper occasions to meditate.

I come now to that question which most deeply interests you at this moment, and that is our relations with the United States. I approved the Government referring this question to arbitration. It was only following the policy of Lord Stanley. My noble friend disapproved the negotiations being carried on at Washington. I confess that I would willingly have persuaded myself that this was not a mistake, but reflection has convinced me that my noble friend was right. I remember the successful negotiation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty by Sir Henry Bulwer. I flattered myself that treaties at Washington might be successfully negotiated; but I agree with my noble friend that his general view was far more sound than my own. But no one when that Commission was sent forth for a moment could anticipate the course of their conduct under the strict injunctions of the Government. We believed that Commission was sent to ascertain what points should be submitted to arbitration, to be decided by the principles of the law of nations. We had not the slightest idea that that Commission was sent with power and instructions to alter the law of nations itself. When that result was announced we expressed our entire

¹ Court of Berlin.

disapprobation, and yet trusting to the representations of the Government that matters were concluded satisfactorily, we had to decide whether it was wise, if the great result was obtained, to wrangle upon points, however important, such as those to which I have referred.

Gentlemen, it appears that, though all parts of England were ready to make the sacrifices, the two negotiating states—the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United State—placed a different interpretation upon the treaty when the time had arrived to put its provisions into practice. Gentlemen, in my mind, and in the opinion of my noble friend near me, there was but one course to take under the circumstance, painful as it might be, and that was at once to appeal to the good feeling and good sense of the United State, and, stating the difficulty, to invite confidential conference whether it might not be removed. But Her Majesty's Government took a different course. On December 15 Her Majesty's Government were aware of a contrary interpretation being placed on the treaty of Washington by the American Government. The Prime Minister received a copy of their counter case, and he confessed he had never read it. He had a considerable number of copies sent to him to distribute among his colleagues, and you remember, probably, the remarkable statement in which he informed the House that he had distributed those copies to everybody except those for whom they were intended.

Time went on, and the adverse interpretation of the American Government oozed out, and was noticed by the press. Public alarm and public indignation were excited, and it was only seven weeks afterward, on the very eve of the meeting of Parliament—some twenty-four hours before the meeting of Parliament—that Her Majesty's Government felt they were absolutely obliged to make a 'friendly communication' to the United States that they had arrived at an interpretation of the treaty the reverse of that of the American Government. What was the position of the American Government? Seven weeks had passed without their having received the slightest intimation from Her Majesty's ministers. They

had circulated their case throughout the world. They had translated it into every European language. It had been sent to every court and cabinet, to every sovereign and prime minister. It was impossible for the American Government to recede from their position, even if they had believed it to be an erroneous one. And then, to aggravate the difficulty, the Prime Minister goes down to Parliament, declares that there is only one interpretation to be placed on the treaty, and defies and attacks everybody who believes it susceptible of another.

Was there ever such a combination of negligence and blundering? And now, gentlemen, what is about to happen? All we know is that Her Majesty's ministers are doing everything in their power to evade the cognisance and criticism of Parliament. They have received an answer to their 'friendly communication;' of which, I believe, it has been ascertained that the American Government adhere to their interpretation; and yet they prolong the controversy. What is about to occur it is unnecessary for one to predict; but if it be this—if after a fruitless ratiocination worthy of a schoolman, we ultimately agree so far to the interpretation of the American Government as to submit the whole case to arbitration, with feeble reservation of a protest if it be decided against us, I venture to say that we shall be entering on a course not more distinguished by its feebleness than by its impending peril. There is before us every prospect of the same incompetence that distinguished our negotiations respecting the independence of the Black Sea; and I fear that there is every chance that this incompetence will be sealed by our ultimately acknowledging these indirect claims of the United States, which, both as regards principle and practical results, are fraught with the utmost danger to this country.

Gentlemen, don't suppose, because I counsel firmness and decision at the right moment, that I am of that school of statesmen who are favourable to a turbulent and aggressive diplomacy. I have resisted it during a great part of my life. I am not unaware that the relations of England to Europe have undergone a vast change during the century that has just elapsed. The relations of England to Europe are not the same

as they were in the days of Lord Chatham or Frederick the Great. The Queen of England has become the Sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental States. On the other side of the globe there are now establishments belonging to her, teeming with wealth and population, which will, in due time, exercise their influence over the distribution of power. The old establishments of this country, now the United States of America, throw their lengthening shades over the Atlantic, which mix with European waters. These are vast and novel elements in the distribution of power. I acknowledge that the policy of England with respect to Europe should be a policy of reserve, but proud reserve; and in answer to those statesmen—those mistaken statesmen who have intimated the decay of the power of England and the decline of its resources, I express here my confident conviction that there never was a moment in our history when the power of England was so great and her resources so vast and inexhaustible.

And yet, gentlemen, it is not merely our fleets and armies, our powerful artillery, our accumulated capital, and our unlimited credit on which I so much depend, as upon that unbroken spirit of her people, which I believe was never prouder of the Imperial country to which they belong. Gentlemen, it is to that spirit that I above all things trust. I look upon the people of Lancashire as a fair representative of the people of England. I think the manner in which they have invited me hert, locally a stranger, to receive the expression of their cordial sympathy, and only because they recognise some effort on my part to maintain the greatness of their country, is evidence of the spirit of the land. I must express to you again my deep sense of the generous manner in which you have welcomed me, and in which you have permitted me to express to you my views upon public affairs. Proud of your confidence and encouraged by your sympathy, I now deliver to you, as my last words, the cause of the Tory Party, the English Constitution, and of the British Empire.

CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PRINCIPLES.

Speech at Crystal Palace, June 24, 1872.

[The lecture delivered by Sir Charles Dilke at Newcastle, on the cost of Royalty, which was regarded as an attack upon the English monarchy, and an avowed Republican manifesto, caused so much displeasure to the population that serious riots ensued and one life was lost. This explains the reference to the 'advanced guard of Liberalism.' For the rest the speech foreshadows pretty closely the policy pursued by the speaker when, two years afterwards, he became Prime Minister.]

MY LORD DUKE AND GENTLEMEN,—I am very sensible of the honour which you have done me in requesting that I should be your guest to-day, and still more for your having associated my name with the important toast which has been proposed by the Lord Mayor. In the few observations that I shall presume to make on this occasion I will confine myself to some suggestions as to the present state of the Constitutional cause and the prospects which you, as a great Constitutional party, have before you. Gentlemen, some years ago—now, indeed, not an inconsiderable period, but within the memory of many who are present—the Tory party experienced a great overthrow. I am here to admit that in my opinion it was deserved. A long course of power and prosperity had induced it to sink into a state of apathy and indifference, and it had deviated from the great principles of that political association which had so long regulated the affairs and been identified with the glory of England. Instead of the principles professed by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, and which those great men inherited from Tory statesmen who had preceded them not less illustrious, the Tory system had degenerated into a policy which found an adequate basis on the principles

of exclusiveness and restriction. Gentlemen, the Tory party, unless it is a national party, is nothing. It is not a confederacy of nobles, it is not a democratic multitude, it is a party formed from all the numerous classes in the realm—classes alike and equal before the law, but whose different conditions and different aims give vigour and variety to our national life.

Gentlemen, a body of public men distinguished by their capacity took advantage of these circumstances. They seized the helm of affairs in a manner the honour of which I do not for a moment question, but they introduced a new system into our political life. Influenced in a great degree by the philosophy and the politics of the Continent, they endeavoured to substitute cosmopolitan for national principles, and they baptized the new scheme of politics with the plausible name of 'Liberalism.' Far be it from me for a moment to intimate that a country like England should not profit by the political experience of Continental nations of not inferior civilisation, far be it from me for a moment to maintain that the party which then obtained power and which has since generally possessed it did not make many suggestions for our public life that were of great value, and bring forward many measures which, though changes, were nevertheless improvements. But the tone and tendency of Liberalism cannot be long concealed. It is to attack the institutions of the country under the name of Reform, and to make war on the manners and customs of the people of this country under the pretext of Progress. During the forty years that have elapsed since the commencement of this new system—although the superficial have seen upon its surface only the contentions of political parties—the real state of affairs has been thus: the attempt of one party to establish in this country cosmopolitan ideas, and the efforts of another—unconscious efforts, sometimes, but always continued—to recur to and resume those national principles to which they attribute the greatness and glory of the country.

The Liberal party cannot complain that they have not had fair play. Never had a political party such advantages, never such opportunities. They are still in power, they have been for a long period in power. And yet what is the result? I

speaking not I am sure the language of exaggeration when I say that they are viewed by the community with distrust and, I might even say, with repugnance. And, now, what is the present prospect of the national party? I have ventured to say that in my opinion Liberalism, from its essential elements, notwithstanding all the energy and ability with which its tenets have been advocated by its friends—notwithstanding the advantage which has accrued to them, as I will confess, from all the mistakes of their opponents, is viewed by the country with distrust. Now in what light is the party of which we are members viewed by the country, and what relation does public opinion bear to our opinions and our policy? That appears to me to be an instructive query; and on an occasion like the present it is as well that we should enter into its investigation as pay mutual compliments to each other, which may in the end, perhaps, prove fallacious.

Now, I have always been of opinion that the Tory party has three great objects. The first is to maintain the institutions of the country—not from any sentiment of political superstition, but because we believe that they embody the principles upon which a community like England can alone safely rest. The principles of liberty, of order, of law, and of religion ought not to be entrusted to individual opinion or to the caprice and passion of multitudes, but should be embodied in a form of permanence and power. We associate with the Monarchy the ideas which it represents—the majesty of law, the administration of justice, the fountain of mercy and of honour. We know that in the Estates of the Realm and the privileges they enjoy, is the best security for public liberty and good government. We believe that a national profession of faith can only be maintained by an Established Church, and that no society is safe unless there is a public recognition of the Providential government of the world, and of the future responsibility of man. Well, it is a curious circumstance that during all these same forty years of triumphant Liberalism, every one of these institutions has been attacked and assailed—I say, continuously attacked and assailed. And what, gentlemen, has been the result? For the last forty years the most depreciating com-

parisons have been instituted between the Sovereignty of England and the Sovereignty of a great Republic. We have been called upon in every way, in Parliament, in the Press, by articles in newspapers, by pamphlets, by every means which can influence opinion, to contrast the simplicity and economy of the Sovereignty of the United States with the cumbrous cost of the Sovereignty of England.

Gentlemen, I need not in this company enter into any vindication of the Sovereignty of England on that head. I have recently¹ enjoyed the opportunity, before a great assemblage of my countrymen, of speaking upon that subject. I have made statements with respect to it which have not been answered either on this side of the Atlantic or the other. Only six months ago the advanced guard of Liberalism,² acting in entire unison with that spirit of assault upon the Monarchy which the literature and the political confederacies of Liberalism have for forty years encouraged, flatly announced itself as Republican, and appealed to the people of England on that distinct issue. Gentlemen, what was the answer? I need not dwell upon it. It is fresh in your memories and hearts. The people of England have expressed, in a manner which cannot be mistaken, that they will uphold the ancient Monarchy of England, the Constitutional Monarchy of England, limited by the co-ordinate authority³ of the Estates of the Realm, but limited by nothing else. Now, if you consider the state of public opinion with regard to those Estates of the Realm, what do you find? Take the case of the House of Lords. The House of Lords has been assailed during this reign of Liberalism in every manner and unceasingly. Its constitution has been denounced as anomalous, its influence declared pernicious; but what has been the result of this assault and criticism of forty years? Why, the people of England, in my opinion, have discovered that the existence of a second Chamber is necessary to Constitutional Government, and, while necessary to Constitutional Government, is, at the same time, of ill

¹ I.e. In preceding speech April 7

² The advanced Radical Party of which Mr Charles Dilke was supposed to be one of the leaders

political inventions the most difficult. Therefore, the people of this country have congratulated themselves that, by the aid of an ancient and famous history, there has been developed in this country an Assembly which possesses all the virtues which a Senate should possess—independence, great local influence, eloquence, all the accomplishments of political life, and a public training which no theory could supply.

The assault of Liberalism upon the House of Lords has been mainly occasioned by the prejudice of Liberalism against the land laws of this country. But in my opinion, and in the opinion of wiser men than myself, and of men in other countries beside this, *the liberty of England depends much upon the landed tenure of England*—upon the fact that there is a class which can alike defy despots and mobs, around which the people may always rally, and which must be patriotic from its intimate connection with the soil. Well, gentlemen, so far as these institutions of the country—the Monarchy and the Lords Spiritual and Temporal—are concerned, I think we may fairly say, without exaggeration, that public opinion is in favour of those institutions, the maintenance of which is one of the principal tenets of the Tory party, and the existence of which has been unceasingly criticised for forty years by the Liberal party. Now, let me say a word about the other Estate of the Realm, which was first attacked by Liberalism.

One of the most distinguishing features of the great change effected in 1832 was that those who brought it about at once abolished all the franchises of the working classes. They were franchises as ancient as those of the Baronage of England; and, while they abolished them, they proposed no substitute. The discontent upon the subject of the representation which has from that time more or less pervaded our society dates from that period, and that discontent, all will admit, has now ceased. It was terminated by the Act of Parliamentary Reform of 1867–8. That Act was founded on a confidence that the great body of the people of this country were ‘Conservative.’ When I say ‘Conservative,’ I use the word in its purest and loftiest sense. I mean that the people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belong-

ing to a great country, and wish to maintain its greatness—that they are proud of belonging to an Imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their empire—that they believe, on the whole, that the greatness and the empire of England are to be attributed to the ancient institutions of the land

Gentlemen, I venture to express my opinion, long entertained, and which has never for a moment faltered, that this is the disposition of the great mass of the people, and I am not misled for a moment by wild expressions and eccentric conduct which may occur in the metropolis of this country. There are people who may be, or who at least affect to be, working men, and who, no doubt, have a certain influence with a certain portion of the metropolitan working classes, who talk Jacobinism. But, gentlemen, that is no novelty. That is not the consequence of recent legislation or of any political legislation that has occurred in this century. There always has been a Jacobinical section in the City of London. I don't particularly refer to that most distinguished and affluent portion of the metropolis which is ruled by my right honourable friend the Lord Mayor. Mr Pitt complained of and suffered by it. There has always been a certain portion of the working class in London who have sympathised—perverse as we may deem the taste—with the Jacobin feelings of Paris. Well, gentlemen, we all know now, after eighty years' experience, in what the Jacobinism of Paris has ended, and I hope I am not too sanguine when I express my conviction that the Jacobinism of London will find a very different result.

I say with confidence that the great body of the working class of England utterly repudiate such sentiments. They have no sympathy with them. They are English to the core. They repudiate cosmopolitan principles. They adhere to national principles. They are for maintaining the greatness of the kingdom and the empire, and they are proud of being subjects of our Sovereign and members of such an Empire. Well, then, as regards the political institutions of this country, the maintenance of which is one of the chief tenets of the Tory party, so far as I can read public opinion, the feeling of the nation is

in accordance with the Tory party. It was not always so. There was a time when the institutions of this country were decried. They have passed through a scathing criticism of forty years; they have passed through that criticism when their political upholders have, generally speaking, been always in opposition. They have been upheld by us when we were unable to exercise any of the lures of power to attract force to us, and the people of this country have arrived at these conclusions from their own thought and their own experience.

Let me say one word upon another institution, the position of which is most interesting at this time. No institution of England, since the advent of Liberalism, has been so systematically, so continuously assailed as the Established Church. Gentlemen, we were first told that the Church was asleep, and it is very possible, as everybody, civil and spiritual, was asleep forty years ago, that that might have been the case. Now we are told that the Church is too active, and that it will be destroyed by its internal restlessness and energy. I see in all these efforts of the Church to represent every mood of the spiritual mind of man, no evidence that it will fall, no proof that any fatal disruption is at hand. I see in the Church, as I believe I see in England, an immense effort to rise to national feelings and recur to national principles. The Church of England, like all our institutions, feels it must be national, and it knows that, to be national, it must be comprehensive. Gentlemen, I have referred to what I look upon as the first object of the Tory party—namely, to maintain the institutions of the country, and reviewing what has occurred, and referring to the present temper of the times upon these subjects, I think that the Tory party, or, as I will venture to call it, the National party, has everything to encourage it. I think that the nation, tested by many and severe trials, has arrived at the conclusion which we have always maintained, that it is the first duty of England to maintain its institutions, because to them we principally ascribe the power and prosperity of the country.

Gentlemen, there is another and second great object of the Tory party. If the first is to maintain the institutions of the country, the second is, in my opinion, to uphold the Empire of

England If you look to the history of this country since the advent of Liberalism—forty years ago—you will find that there has been no effort so continuous, so subtle, supported by so much energy, and carried on with so much ability and acumen, as the attempts of Liberalism to effect the disintegration of the Empire of England

And, gentlemen, of all its efforts, this is the one which has been the nearest to success Statesmen of the highest character, writers of the most distinguished ability, the most organised and efficient means, have been employed in this endeavour It has been proved to all of us that we have lost money by our colonies It has been shown with precise, with mathematical demonstration, that there never was a jewel in the Crown of England that was so truly costly as the possession of India How often has it been suggested that we should at once emancipate ourselves from this incubus Well, that result was nearly accomplished When those subtle views were adopted by the country under the plausible plea of granting self-government to the Colonies, I confess that I myself thought that the tie was broken Not that I for one object to self-government I cannot conceive how our distant colonies can have their affairs administered except by self-government But self-government, in my opinion, when it was conceded, ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation It ought to have been accompanied by an Imperial tariff, by securities for the people of England for the enjoyment of the unappropriated lands which belonged to the Sovereign as their trustee, and by a military code which should have precisely defined the means and the responsibilities by which the colonies should be defended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the colonies themselves It ought, further, to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the metropolis, which would have brought the Colonies into constant and continuous relations with the Home Government All this, however, was omitted because those who advised that policy—and I believe their convictions were sincere—looked upon the Colonies of England, looked even upon our connection with

India, as a burden upon this country, viewing everything in a financial aspect, and totally passing by those moral and political considerations which make nations great, and by the influence of which alone men are distinguished from animals.

Well, what has been the result of this attempt during the reign of Liberalism for the disintegration of the Empire? It has entirely failed. But how has it failed? Through the sympathy of the Colonies with the Mother Country. They have decided that the Empire shall not be destroyed, and in my opinion no minister in this country will do his duty who neglects any opportunity of reconstructing as much as possible our Colonial Empire, and of responding to those distant sympathies which may become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to this land. Therefore, gentlemen, with respect to the second great object of the Tory party also—the maintenance of the Empire—public opinion appears to be in favour of our principles—that public opinion which, I am bound to say, thirty years ago, was not favourable to our principles, and which, during a long interval of controversy, in the interval had been doubtful.

Gentlemen, another great object of the Tory party, and one not inferior to the maintenance of the Empire, or the upholding of our institutions, is the elevation of the condition of the people. Let us see in this great struggle between Toryism and Liberalism that has prevailed in this country during the last forty years what are the salient features. It must be obvious to all who consider the condition of the multitude with a desire to improve and elevate it, that no important step can be gained unless you can effect some reduction of their hours of labour and humanise their toil. The great problem is to be able to achieve such results without violating those principles of economic truth upon which the prosperity of all States depends. You recollect well that many years ago the Tory party believed that these two results might be obtained—that you might elevate the condition of the people by the reduction of their toil and the mitigation of their labour, and at the same time inflict no injury on the wealth of the nation. You know how that effort was encountered—how these views and principles

were met by the triumphant statesmen of Liberalism. They told you that the inevitable consequence of your policy was to diminish capital, that this, again, would lead to the lowering of wages, to a great diminution of the employment of the people, and ultimately to the impoverishment of the kingdom.

These were not merely the opinions of Ministers of State, but those of the most blatant and loud-mouthed leaders of the Liberal party. And what has been the result? Those measures were carried, but carried, as I can bear witness, with great difficulty and after much labour and a long struggle. Yet they were carried, and what do we now find? That capital was never accumulated so quickly, that wages were never higher, that the employment of the people was never greater, and the country never wealthier. I ventured to say a short time ago, speaking in one of the great cities of this country, that the health of the people was the most important question for a statesman. It is, gentlemen, a large subject. It has many branches. It involves the state of the dwellings of the people, the moral consequences of which are not less considerable than the physical. It involves their enjoyment of some of the chief elements of nature—air, light, and water. It involves the regulation of their industry, the inspection of their toil. It involves the purity of their provisions, and it touches upon all the means by which you may wean them from habits of excess and of brutality. Now, what is the feeling upon the subjects of the Liberal party—that Liberal party who opposed the Tory party when, even in their weakness, they advocated a diminution of the toil of the people, and introduced and supported the Factory Laws, the principles of which they extended, in the brief period when they possessed power, to every other trade in the country? What is the opinion of the great Liberal party—the party that seeks to substitute cosmopolitan for national principles in the government of this country—on this subject? Why, the views which I expressed in the great capital of the county of Lancaster have been held up to derision by the Liberal Press. A leading member—a very rising member, at least, among the new Liberal members—denounced them the other day as the ‘policy of sewage.’

Well, it may be the 'policy of sewage' to a Liberal member of Parliament. But to one of the labouring multitude of England, who has found fever always to be one of the inmates of his household—who has, year after year, seen stricken down the children of his loins, on whose sympathy and material support he has looked with hope and confidence, it is not a 'policy of sewage,' but a question of life and death. And I can tell you this, gentlemen, from personal conversation with some of the most intelligent of the labouring class—and I think there are many of them in this room who can bear witness to what I say—that the policy of the Tory party—the hereditary, the traditional policy of the Tory party, that would improve the condition of the people—is more appreciated by the people than the ineffable mysteries and all the pains and penalties of the Ballot Bill. Gentlemen, is that wonderful? Consider the condition of the great body of the working classes of this country. They are in possession of personal privileges—of personal rights and liberties—which are not enjoyed by the aristocracies of other countries. Recently they have obtained—and wisely obtained—a great extension of political rights; and when the people of England see that under the constitution of this country, by means of the constitutional cause which my right honourable friend the Lord Mayor has proposed, they possess every personal right of freedom, and, according to the conviction of the whole country, also an adequate concession of political rights, is it at all wonderful that they should wish to elevate and improve their condition, and is it unreasonable that they should ask the Legislature to assist them in that behest as far as it is consistent with the general welfare of the realm?

Why, the people of England would be greater idiots than the Jacobinical leaders of London even suppose, if, with their experience and acuteness, they should not long have seen that the time had arrived when social, and not political improvement is the object which they ought to pursue. I have touched, gentlemen, on the three great objects of the Tory party. I told you I would try to ascertain what was the position of the Tory party with reference to the country now. I have told you also with frankness what I believe the position of the Liberal

party to be. Notwithstanding their proud position, I believe they are viewed by the country with mistrust and repugnance. But on all the three great objects which are sought by Toryism—the maintenance of our institutions, the preservation of our Empire, and the improvement of the condition of the people—I find a rising opinion in the country sympathising with our tenets, and prepared, I believe, if the opportunity offers, to uphold them until they prevail.

Before sitting down, I would make one remark particularly applicable to those whom I am now addressing. This is a numerous assembly, this is an assembly individually influential, but it is not on account of its numbers, it is not on account of its individual influence, that I find it to me deeply interesting. It is because I know that I am addressing a representative assembly. It is because I know that there are men here who come from all districts and all quarters of England, who represent classes and powerful societies, and who meet here not merely for the pleasure of a festival, but because they believe that our assembling together may lead to national advantage. Yes, I tell all who are here present that there is a responsibility which you have incurred to-day, and which you must meet like men. When you return to your homes, when you return to your counties and to your cities, you must tell to all those whom you can influence that the time is at hand, that, at least, it cannot be far distant, when England will have to decide between national and cosmopolitan principles. The issue is not a mere one. It is whether you will be content to be a comfortable England, modelled and moulded upon Continental principles and meeting in due course an inevitable fate, or whether you will be a great country,—an Imperial country,—a country where your sons, when they rise, rise to paramount positions, and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world.

Upon you depends the issue. Whatever may be the general feeling, you must remember that in fighting against Liberalism or the Continental system you are fighting against those who have the advantage of power—against those who have been in high places for nearly half a century. You have nothing to

trust to but your own energy and the sublime instinct of an ancient people. You must act as if everything depended on your individual efforts. The secret of success is constancy of purpose. Go to your homes, and teach there these truths, which will soon be imprinted on the conscience of the land. Make each man feel how much rests on his own exertions. The highest, like my noble friend the chairman, may lend us his great aid. But rest assured that the assistance of the humblest is not less efficient. Act in this spirit, and you will succeed. You will maintain your country in its present position. But you will do more than that—you will deliver to your posterity a land of liberty, of prosperity, of power, and of glory.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTERS, 1873

MR. DISRAELI'S EXPLANATION OF REFUSAL TO TAKE OFFICE, MARCH
20, 1873

[After the defeat of the Government on the Irish Universities Bill on March 11, Mr Gladstone placed his resignation in the hands of Her Majesty, who at once sent for Mr Disraeli. The right honourable gentleman declined to take office in the existing House of Commons, even with authority to dissolve it as soon as public business should allow. His reasons for this decision are here given, and he confutes the doctrine that no leader of Opposition should ever give a vote liable to defeat the minister unless he is prepared to take his place. Such a doctrine, if generally acted on, would make all effective criticism impossible, since a statesman strong enough to take the minister's place could not long remain in Opposition, and one not strong enough to succeed him would not be entitled to oppose him.]

MR SPEAKER,—Before I refer to the allusions which the right honourable gentleman has made to some controversial elements which, during the last few days, may have arisen between him and myself with respect either to the conduct of this side of the House, in reference to the recent vote, or my own in declining the high responsibility which Her Majesty graciously suggested to me to undertake, I think it may be convenient that I should as clearly as I can place before the House exactly what part I have taken in these recent transactions, and give fully the reasons for the counsel which I presumed to offer Her Majesty under the circumstances. It was on this day week, when I was about to enter the House of Commons, that I had the honour of receiving a letter from the Queen, informing me that Mr. Gladstone—I am correct in mentioning the right honourable gentleman's name—had just quitted the

Palace, having offered his own resignation and that of his colleagues to Her Majesty in consequence of the vote at which the House of Commons arrived on the preceding Tuesday, and that Her Majesty had accepted those resignations. The Queen inquired from me whether I would undertake to form a Government, and commanded my attendance at the Palace. When I was in audience I inquired of Her Majesty whether she wished that I should give a categorical answer to the question asked in Her Majesty's letter, or whether she desired that I should enter fully into the political situation. Her Majesty was graciously pleased to say that she should like to have an answer to that question, and that afterwards she wished me fully and freely to speak upon the present condition of affairs. The question being whether I would undertake to form a Government, I at once said that I believed I should have no material difficulty in forming an administration which could carry on the affairs of this country with efficiency, and be entitled to Her Majesty's confidence, but that I could not undertake to conduct Her Majesty's affairs in the present House of Commons.

After that I proceeded—with Her Majesty's permission—to lay before the Queen the reasons which had induced me to arrive at this conclusion, and I will now, in as succinct a manner as I can, give these reasons to the House. I called Her Majesty's attention to the fact that, although the course of the public elections during the last two years had shown, in a manner which I think must be acknowledged by all impartial persons, that there was a change, and even a considerable change, in public opinion, and in favour of the party with whom I have the honour to act in Parliament, still it was a fact which ought to be placed clearly before Her Majesty, that the right honourable gentleman opposite—notwithstanding all these gains by the Conservative party—was supported by a very large majority, and that I could not place that majority at a figure which could be accurately expressed, unless I stated that it approached more nearly to ninety than eighty. I believe I was correct in saying the majority of the right honourable gentleman was eighty-eight.

Then I called the attention of the Queen to the fact that

the recent division indicated no elements to which I could look with any confidence to obtain subsidiary or extraneous aid which would in any considerable degree, or perhaps in any degree whatever, modify the numerical position of the right honourable gentleman, that the discomfiture of the Government was caused, and the majority against them created, by the vote of a considerable section of the Liberal party, consisting of Irish members, who might be fairly described as representing the Roman Catholic interest, and that there was no common bond of union between myself and that party. I stated that they would act—and most honourably act—with a view to effect the object which they wish to accomplish, namely, the establishment of a Roman Catholic University, that, in my opinion, that question had been definitely decided by the nation at the last general election, but that totally irrespective of that national decision, events had occurred in Parliament since, which rendered it quite impossible for me to listen to any suggestions of the kind, because, since the last general election, the endowments of the Protestant Church of Ireland had been taken away from it, a policy which I entirely disapproved, which I had resisted, and which they had supported, and which, having been carried into effect, offered in my mind a permanent and insurmountable barrier to the policy which they wished to see pursued.

Under these circumstances, I had to place before Her Majesty that I, with my colleagues, should have to conduct her affairs in a House of Commons with a most powerful majority arrayed against us. I had to point out to Her Majesty that this was a position of affairs of which I had some personal experience, that I believed it to be one detrimental to the public interest, that it permitted abstract resolutions on political affairs to be brought forward by persons who had no political responsibility, and that those resolutions were referred to afterwards, and precipitated the solution of great public questions which were not ripe for settlement. I represented to Her Majesty that this was a state of affairs which diminished authority, weakened Government, certainly added no lustre to the Crown, but, above all, destroyed that general public confi-

dence which is the most vigorous and legitimate source of power. Under these circumstances I felt it my duty to ask Her Majesty graciously to relieve me from the task which she had suggested to my consideration.

Now, Sir, it will be asked, and has been asked, no doubt in every street, and every chamber in this town, why, when being able to form an efficient administration, and having been summoned to the councils of Her Majesty deprived of the assistance of her previous advisers, the only obstacle before me being that I had to encounter a hostile majority in the House of Commons—it will be asked, I say, why, under these circumstances, I did not advise Her Majesty to dissolve Parliament. To that point, with the permission of the House, I will now address myself. Sir, a dissolution of Parliament is a political function respecting which considerable misconception exists. It is supposed to be an act which can be performed with great promptitude, and which is a resource to which a minister may recur with the utmost facility. But the fact is that great mistakes prevail respecting this important exercise of the prerogative. A dissolution of Parliament is a very different instrument in different hands. It is an instrument of which a minister in office, with his Government established, can avail himself with a facility of which a minister who is only going to accede to office is deprived. A minister in office, having his Government formed, with many indications probably of the critical circumstances which may render it imperative on him to advise the sovereign to exercise this prerogative, has the opportunity of disposing of the public business preparatory to the act which he advises.

But the position of a minister who is only going to accede to office is, in this respect, very different. In the first place he has to form his administration, and that is a work of great time, great labour, and of great responsibility. It is not confined merely to the construction of a cabinet, which, when you are honoured by the confidence of many companions in public life, is often the least difficult part of the task; but it requires communication with probably more than fifty individuals, all of them persons of consideration, with whom you must personally confer. The construction of a ministry falls

entirely on the individual intrusted with its formation. It is a duty which can be delegated to no one. All the correspondence and all the interviews must be conducted by himself, and without dwelling on the sense of responsibility involved, the perception of fitness requisite, and the severe impartiality necessary in deciding on contending claims, the mere physical effort is not slight, and two thirds of the new ministers also must appeal for re-election to their constituents.

As a matter of time that materially affects the position of the Government. Now in the present case, it would not have been possible for me to have formed a Government, and to have placed it on that bench and in the other House in working gear, until Easter. Well, the holidays would have intervened. After the holidays it might have been possible, by having recourse to methods I greatly disapprove—namely, provisional finance, by votes of credit, or rather votes on account, and by taking a step which, for reasons I will afterwards give, I highly reprobate—namely, accepting the estimates of our predecessors—it might have been possible to have dissolved Parliament in the early part of the month of May. But when the month of May arrived, this question would occur—what are you going to dissolve Parliament about? There was no particular issue before the country—it least it cannot be pretended for a moment that there was any one of those issues before the country that have previously justified extraordinary dissolutions of Parliament—questions which the country wished passionately to decide, and when in a political exigency of that kind a minister is perfectly justified in having recourse to provisional finance or any other means by which he can obtain the earliest decision of the country.

I wish the House for a moment to consider impartially what was the real position of affairs. Her Majesty's ministers had resigned. Her Majesty had called on the leader of the Opposition to form a ministry, while he had nearly a majority of ninety arrayed against him. It was in his opinion necessary, of course, in the circumstances, to appeal to the country, in order that that majority might be changed, probably into one—though perhaps not of that amount—in his favour. But if that

be the real state of the case—if there was no issue before the country—for I do not suppose any one would maintain that the Irish University Bill was a question on which we could dissolve—the right honourable gentleman by dissolving might have wished to punish those who voted against him; but I could not take that course, for I was one of the criminals. If the case be as I state, that we could not carry on affairs without an appeal to the country upon grounds which would justify the constituencies in giving us a majority, is it not quite clear that we could not appeal to the country without having a matured and complete policy?

Honourable gentlemen opposite may laugh at the word ‘policy’; but I would suggest that it is impossible for those who sit on the Opposition bench suddenly to have a matured policy to present to the people of this country in case Parliament is dissolved. An Opposition, of whatever party it may be formed, is essentially a critical body; it is not a constructive one, and it cannot be. Upon all the great subjects of the day, no doubt, gentlemen sitting on this side of the House have certain views and principles which guide them in dealing with the circumstances and measures before Parliament; but they must know that on all these questions they cannot for a moment rival the information possessed by a Government. However they may wish to do their duty to this House and offer their views and arguments for discussion, there is a degree of information which it is impossible to obtain by any but a minister. Take a case illustrative of this. There is the question of our relations at this moment with Central Asia. No one will deny for a moment that this is a question of the highest importance; it is one in some degree of instant interest, but still more grave from its ultimate consequences. If there was a discussion of the Central Asian question, I myself or my friends around me might presume to offer our opinions to the House; but so far as I am concerned, I shall speak, as I trust I do on all matters of foreign policy, with reserve and unaffected diffidence, because I know very well that were I to cross the floor of this House and enter the archives of Downing Street, I should find information

there which I do not now possess, which might modify, nay, *entirely change my views*, which might render it even necessary that, after much deliberation, we should place ourselves in communication with agents and authorities, and that we might even have to shape a particular course of action.

All this cannot be done in a moment. And yet how could we dissolve Parliament, and appeal to the country for its confidence, without guiding it on a subject which, although the English people are not fanatically anxious to interfere in foreign affairs, unquestionably much occupies the public mind, and especially of those thoughtful classes who influence opinion. And yet until we were in office, and had the means of considering and maturing our policy on the subject, the House must feel that would have been impossible. We should have had to go on that and other matters with a blank sheet of paper to the constituencies. Would that, I ask, have been an appeal becoming us to make to a sensible people like the English nation?

Take another question. My right honourable friend the member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gathorne Hardy) has given notice of a motion upon a subject infinitely more important than any Irish University question—which concerns the highest interests of the country—one on which it is in my opinion the duty of a minister to take a decided course, and to come at a precise resolution—I speak of those three rules which Her Majesty's Government are attempting to introduce into international law, which touch most intimately the rights of neutrals, and if misinterpreted must injuriously affect this country. How would it be possible to appeal to the people of England so to exercise their suffrages that they should convert the large majority of the right honourable gentlemen opposite into a majority in favour of those who sit on this side of the House if we blinked giving our opinion on that vast question? They would say, you appeal to the country, you ask for our confidence—what do you mean to do about that mysterious and perplexing question of the three new rules proposed to be introduced into international law which affect all the rights of neutrals, and on which the position of this country may be

mately depend? It is clear that on such a matter we must speak with decision and act with energy. How are we to do that unless we have the opportunity of investigating affairs with the information which is only at the command of a minister, who can then come forward with a policy for which he is ready to be responsible?

I do not wish to push the case with regard to foreign affairs farther, but I would remind the House that there is also the question of the mode of payment of the compensation money awarded by the Tribunal of Geneva. That also is a question in which the country wants to be guided and instructed by a ministry. There is, however, one other point I cannot help noticing, and that is the French treaty of commerce. I have endeavoured to follow the negotiations with respect to that treaty, but I confess I feel somewhat at sea with regard to them. I really do not know the engagements into which the Government are about to enter, but it is a subject of vast interest to the country. Judging from the communications made to me within the last week from the great seats of industry, no minister could dissolve without speaking on that subject in a precise and definite manner. I mentioned to the House just now the necessity, in case we dissolved Parliament in the month of May—which would be the earliest possible period—of accepting the estimates of our predecessors, which are on the table. As a general rule, and at all times, I highly reprobate that course. Nothing but a political exigency, nothing but the existence of a question on which the country is passionately determined to have an instant decision, can justify a minister in taking that course. But look to our particular position with respect to this subject? You must remember that at the last general election the country was particularly appealed to on the head of expenditure. The expenditure of the Government of which I was the head was denounced as ‘profligate’; and the manner in which it was so held up to the people of this country greatly influenced the elections, quite as much as the question of that unfortunate institution, the Irish Church, the spoliation of which, I believe, is not now so popular as it was at that time. I speak with due

diffidence on the point ; there are alterations made in the mode of keeping the accounts since the election of 1868 ; but, making all the deductions I can on this head, it does not appear to me that the expenditure of the country at the present moment is less than it was when it was denounced at the election of 1868. I certainly do not wish on this occasion to make any charge against the present Government ; but this I may say, it is a subject most important and interesting to the people of England, and one which, if I were a responsible minister to-morrow, it would be my first task and effort to scrutinise with a view to find out whether there was any ground for the denunciation of the expenditure of 1868, and whether there are adequate grounds for the expenditure which at present prevails. This is a most grave business, which cannot be done in a moment. The estimates of this country cannot and ought not to be settled by a few Treasury clerks. I have endeavoured to impress upon the House more than once—and generally speaking the principle has been accepted—that expenditure depends upon policy ; and, therefore, before we could decide what was the fitting expenditure of the country, especially in armaments, we must be minutely and accurately informed what are our engagements and relations with the various Powers of the world.

If it be true that expenditure depends upon policy, I beg the House to remember that, since I was at the head of public affairs, the greatest revolution has happened in Europe since the first great French Revolution at the end of the last century. Much greater changes have occurred in Europe since the Government of 1868 than were effected by the congress and the treaty of Vienna. The congress and treaty of Vienna left the boundaries of France untouched ; they left Germany divided among a variety of princes and potentates ; they left a divided Italy ; and they left Rome in the possession of the Pope. All these conditions have changed ; and many of the most important considerations that the Government of the day had to enter into when they decided upon our armaments in 1867 and 1868 are entirely changed. I do not mean to say there may not be new quarters in which it may be necessary to take precautions ; but the House will, I think, on reflection, agree with

me that all the data upon which the expenditure for our armaments was calculated in 1868 are entirely changed. The consideration of these subjects would be a task which a new Government must enter into heartily, sincerely and thoroughly. It would be impossible to go to the country, especially upon this subject of expenditure, in perfect silence, and offer only a blank sheet. It is quite clear, if that be the case, we have first of all to consider the engagements and relations of this country with foreign powers ; secondly, whether our armaments are efficient and sufficient for the purpose ; and thirdly, whether that efficiency and sufficiency have been attained in the most economical manner. Is this an affair that can be accomplished with the facility with which, sitting on an Opposition bench, you can write an address to your constituents? The House will see that, before making an appeal to the country, it would be necessary that we should encounter preliminary duties of the gravest responsibility.

I go further on this head. However anxious a Government may be, in the contemplation of a dissolution of Parliament, to wind up public affairs, however anxious they may be to discharge only those duties which seem absolutely necessary for carrying on the public service, I have observed that there is always some large question which cannot be shelved or shunted, either from the peculiar interest which the country takes in it or the engagements of successive ministers, and sometimes, and not uncommonly, from its indirect influence upon imperial finance ; and there is one of those questions now—there is the question of Local Taxation. It would be impossible for a ministry formed from the benches on either side, certainly from these benches, to go to the country and to be silent on the question of Local Taxation. It is no light matter to grapple with. It is possible, I give no opinion on that head now, that in attempting to settle it you may have to interfere with your imperial finance, and that a Budget may be affected by it. Well, what is the upshot? The upshot is that if we had accepted office we should have had to conduct the affairs of Her Majesty's Government in Parliament for the whole session, and for a session of no ordinary

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length, and I was not prepared to take a step of that kind. I know from experience, as I mentioned before, what is the consequence to a party and to the public interests of endeavouring to carry on the Government of the country in a House in which a large majority is arrayed against you.

I am not referring to the period when I had the honour to introduce and conduct through the House a Bill to amend the representation of the people. I said then, and I say now, I think that the conduct of the House to Her Majesty's Ministers was independent, generous, and spirited. To that Bill the right honourable gentleman opposite, as the leader of the Opposition, offered an uncompromising opposition. I had the assistance of the House, and that Bill was triumphantly read a second time, and after the Easter holidays, when the right honourable gentleman rallied his forces and himself brought forward a motion which, if carried, would have been fatal to it, the right honourable gentleman was signally defeated. Therefore it is a perversion of terms to say that at that time we were carrying on the Government with a minority, because on critical occasions we had a majority, and the leader of the Opposition was defeated. But, Sir, I have had some experience of conducting the Government really in a minority. I take the case of the Government of 1852. It is well known that Lord Derby was most disinclined to take office. He had declined it in 1851 under circumstances most painful to himself. The Queen was left for forty-eight hours without a Government. In 1852 Lord Derby was obliged to take office, yet before he took it he made overtures to Lord Palmerston to construct a Government with him, and Lord Palmerston, who seemed not unwilling to assist my noble friend, declined on the ground that he had no friends. A man whom we all remember as the most popular minister in England, gravely, and I believe sincerely, gave that as his reason. I believe Lord Derby on that occasion made overtures also to the right honourable gentleman opposite.

¹ See his overtures were certainly made in 1851 and in 1852 "something like I have passed if any credit is to be attached to a statement it to be found in the *Life of Bishop Doane* vol. 1 p. 164. The 1st of these says that Gladstone would have preferred to join the Government but that that was made the more impossible. The 2nd says that was not correctly informed.

(Mr. Gladstone: No, no!) At all events he spared no pains, and I know that to many gentlemen who were not in political association with him he made overtures. Lord Derby was obliged to take the reins of Government. He formed a cabinet of individuals who had never been in office; and the leadership of this House, for the only time I believe since the days of Lord Shelburne, was intrusted to an individual who had not the slightest official experience.

If ever there was an occasion, one would think, for generous treatment on the part of the House of Commons, however great the majority might be, that was the instance. But what happened? The moment he took office the supplies were voted for six months only, forcing him to call Parliament together in November, when he was obliged to bring forward remedial measures essentially financial, and when the permanent officers of the Government declared that the estimates could only be imaginary. I know well—and those who are around me know well—what will occur when a ministry takes office and attempts to carry on the Government with a minority during the session, with a view of ultimately appealing to the people. We should have what is called ‘fair play.’ That is to say, no vote of want of confidence would be proposed, and chiefly because it would be of no use. There would be no wholesale censure, but retail humiliation. A right honourable gentleman will come down here, he will arrange his thumb-screws and other instruments of torture on this table—we shall never ask for a vote without a lecture; we shall never perform the most ordinary routine office of Government without there being annexed to it some pedantic and ignominious condition.

I wish to express nothing but what I know from painful personal experience. No contradiction of the kind I have just encountered could divest me of the painful memory; I wish it could. I wish it was not my duty to take this view of the case. In a certain time we should enter into the paradise of abstract resolutions. One day honourable gentlemen cannot withstand the golden opportunity of asking the House to affirm that the income tax should no longer form one of the features of our Ways and Means. Of course a proposition of that kind would

he scouted by the right honourable gentleman and all his colleagues; but then they might dine out that day, and the resolution might be carried, as resolutions of that kind have been. Then another honourable gentleman distinguished for his knowledge of men and things would move that the diplomatic service be abolished. While honourable gentlemen opposite were laughing in their sleeves at the mover, they would vote for the motion in order to put the Government into a minority. For this reason:—‘Why should men,’ they would say, ‘govern the country who are in a minority?’ totally forgetting that we had acceded to office in the spirit of the Constitution, quite oblivious of the fountain and origin of the position we occupied. And it would go very hard if on some sultry afternoon some honourable member should not ‘rush in where angels fear to tread,’ and successfully assimilate the borough and the county franchise. And so things would go on until the bitter end—until at last even the Appropriation Bill has passed, Parliament is dissolved, and we appeal to those millions who, perhaps six months before, might have looked upon us as the vindicators of intolerable grievances, but who now receive us as a defeated, discredited, and degraded ministry, whose services can be neither of value to the Crown nor a credit to the nation.

Well, Sir, with these views, I think the House cannot be surprised that I should have felt it my duty, in concurrence with all those with whom I have acted in public life, humbly to represent to Her Majesty that I did not think it would be for the public advantage or for the honour of the Crown that, under such circumstances—namely, the existence of a powerful majority against us—we should attempt to conduct Her Majesty’s affairs. Having announced that I did not feel it my duty to recommend Her Majesty to dissolve Parliament, I might, so far as Parliamentary precedent is concerned, here drop this subject; but there have been misconceptions on this head which I wish to remove, and therefore I may be allowed to say that Her Majesty on this occasion—with that judicial impartiality which she displays to all who serve her—when, after the enumeration of these difficulties, I hesitated in accept-

ing the offer that was so graciously made to me, did impress upon me that if I undertook the task I might count upon her most cordial support, and that if a dissolution could at all assist me I might depend upon the exercise of the Royal prerogative for that result.

However, I was obliged to represent to Her Majesty, by means of the details which I have given you, though not perhaps, at so much technical length, that a dissolution of Parliament would not remove the obstacles to which I have referred. I ought not to pass unnoticed the observations with which the right honourable gentleman commenced his address. The right honourable gentleman has with candour and temper referred to the delay which elapsed between Thursday and Sunday in forming a cabinet, and I think the House will agree with me that he has acquitted me—at least I understood him to do so—of being the cause of that delay. The right honourable gentleman seems to have misapprehended the decision which on my part I thought was singularly precise and definite. The right honourable gentleman has referred to a controversy between us which has not appeared before the House on that conduct of the Opposition in the course which they took on the motion for the second reading of the University Bill. I have no wish to enter into any discussion on this subject. The right honourable gentleman will bear me out that in my letter to Her Majesty I at least did not shrink from arguing the question, and vindicating on constitutional grounds the course which we took. I refrain from further alluding to this subject, but I must say, in passing, I thought it was a most gracious condescension on the part of Her Majesty to deign to become the medium of communication, in order, to use Her Majesty's language, 'to prevent, if possible, misconceptions.' As to the charge against myself, that I did not take sufficient pains or exhaust the means of forming a cabinet on the occasion, and which appears to have been the cause of the hesitation in the right honourable gentleman's mind, I hope that, as the right honourable gentleman has read a passage on that head, I may also read a passage from my letter to Her Majesty on the subject. In it I say,

'The charge against the Leader of the Opposition personally, that by "his summary refusal" to undertake your Majesty's Government he was failing in his duty to your Majesty and the country, is founded altogether on a gratuitous assumption of Mr Gladstone, which pervades his letter, that the means of Mr. Disraeli to carry on the Government were not exhausted. A brief statement of facts will at once dispose of this charge. Before Mr Disraeli, with due deference, offered his decision to your Majesty, he had enjoyed the opportunity of consulting those gentlemen with whom he acts in public life, and they were unanimously of opinion that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the country for a Conservative Administration to attempt to conduct your Majesty's affairs in the present House of Commons. What other means were at Mr Disraeli's disposal? Was he to open negotiations with a section of the late Ministry, and waste days in barren interviews, vain applications, and the device of impossible combinations? Was he to make overtures to the considerable section of the Liberal party who had voted against the Government—namely, the Irish Roman Catholic gentlemen? Surely Mr. Gladstone could not seriously contemplate this? Impressed, from experience obtained in the very instances to which Mr Gladstone refers, of the detrimental influence upon Government of a crisis unnecessarily prolonged by hollow negotiations, Mr Disraeli humbly conceived that he was taking a course at once advantageous to the public interests, and tending to spare your Majesty unnecessary anxiety by at once laying before your Majesty the real position of affairs.'

I spoke particularly from the experience which I, then myself inexperienced in public affairs, obtained when acting with Lord Derby and witnessing the course he took with reference to the Government of 1852; and if it be, as I hold, one of the greatest disadvantages of these political crises that so much public time should be wasted, that Parliament should become dislocated, that public business should be postponed or measures given up, and that the public mind should be disturbed, I consider I was doing my duty when I took every possible means to make the period during which the right honourable gentle-

man was absent from office as short as possible. While upon this subject, I beg to say that, although I did not presume to give any advice to Her Majesty as to whom she should send for, as this is a peculiar right of the Crown with which no one ought to interfere, yet in speaking of the difficulties of the position in which Her Majesty was placed, I did give my opinion that I thought the cause for the resignation of the right honourable gentleman and his colleagues was hardly adequate to the great event which had occurred. It appeared to me that, under the circumstances of the case, the right honourable gentleman was scarcely justified in the course he pursued, because we must remember that the unfortunate University Bill had been unpopular in this House from the beginning, and that a large section of the Liberal party opposed it on the same grounds on which it was opposed by honourable gentlemen on this side of the House—namely, that it sacrificed the educational interests of Ireland to the claims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. When we took that line in debate it was with a complete anticipation that every gentleman connected with the Roman Catholic interest in Ireland would support Her Majesty's ministers. But I said it was possible that the right honourable gentleman, in consequence I will not say of a hasty, but, as I think, of an unfortunate expression¹ he used a month ago when he introduced the Bill, might feel his honour concerned so far as to be obliged to resign office. As regards his honour a statesman cannot be too nice and scrupulous; but I thought the right honourable gentleman's honour was vindicated by the act of resignation, and that he might return to office without the slightest difficulty.

I am quite aware that the counsel I humbly recommended to Her Majesty in these negotiations may have been disappointing to some of my supporters in this House, and to many of my supporters in the country; but I would fain believe that, when they have given a mature and an impartial consideration to all the circumstances, they will not visit my conduct with a verdict of unqualified condemnation. I believe that the Tory party at the present time occupies the most satisfactory position which it has held since the days of its

¹ *I.e.*, that it was a cabinet question.

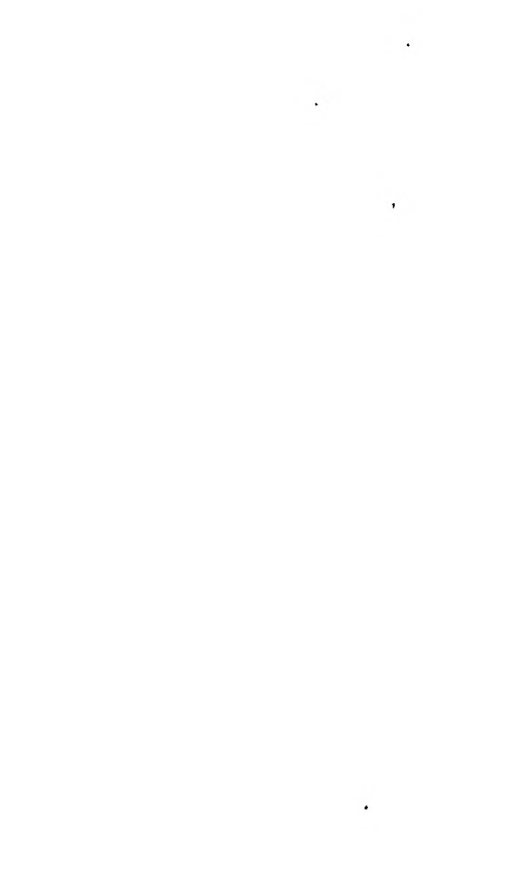
greatest statesmen, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville. It has divested itself of those excrecences which are not indigenous to its native growth, but which in a time of long prosperity were the consequence partly of negligence, and partly perhaps, in a certain degree, of ignorance of its traditions. We are now emerging from the fiscal period in which almost all the public men of this generation have been brought up. All the questions of Trade and Navigation, of the Incidence of Taxation and of Public Economy, are settled. But there are other questions not less important, and of deeper and higher reach and range, which must soon engage the attention of the country. The attributes of a Constitutional Monarchy,—whether the aristocratic principle should be recognised in our Constitution, and, if so, in what form?—whether the Commons of England shall remain an estate of the realm, numerous but privileged and qualified, or whether they should degenerate into an indiscriminate multitude?—whether a National Church shall be maintained, and, if so, what shall be its rights and duties?—the functions of corporations, the sacredness of endowments, the tenure of landed property, the free disposal and even the existence of any kind of property—all those institutions and all those principles which have made this country free and famous, and conspicuous for its union of order with liberty, are now impugned, and in due time will become great and ‘burning’ questions. I think it is of the utmost importance that when that time—which may be nearer at hand than we imagine—arrives there shall be in this country a great *constitutional party, distinguished for its intelligence as well as for its organisation, which shall be competent to lead the people and direct the public mind.* And, Sir, when that time arrives, and when they enter upon a career which must be noble, and which I hope and believe will be triumphant, I think they may perhaps remember, and not perhaps with unkindness, that I at least prevented one obstacle from being placed in their way, when as the trustee of their honour and their interests I declined to form a weak and discredited Administration.

PART V.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Between the years 1860 and 1864 Mr. Disraeli delivered several speeches on the Church of England of great interest and value, which were afterwards collected and republished under the title of 'Church and Queen.' I have here given the most interesting of them.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE CHURCH	Nov. 14, 1861.
THE FUTURE POSITION OF THE CHURCH .	Oct. 30, 1862.
ON ACT OF UNIFORMITY	JUNE 9, 1863.
ON CHURCH POLICY.	Nov. 25, 1864.



THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

[At the annual meeting of the Oxford Diocesan Church Societies, held at Aylesbury, November 14, 1861, the Bishop of Oxford presiding, Mr. Disraeli spoke as follows :—]

MY LORD BISHOP, I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution which has been proposed by the Venerable Archdeacon Bickersteth. Your lordship has with such comprehensive clearness placed before this meeting the object of the diocesan societies, and the venerable archdeacon has with such lucid precision stated to us the results of their operations, that it will not be necessary for me to weary this meeting with much detail. Although each of these societies has an independent constitution, and proposes to itself a specific object, they, in fact, form one great whole. They propose to provide the people of this diocese with education upon those principles which we believe to be sound and true ; to provide for the spiritual supervision of the population of this diocese, and to supply the deficiencies of our parochial system wherever it is incomplete or inadequate. Lastly, they propose to provide for the people of this county sufficient and decorous means of worshipping Almighty God. These, then, are the three great purposes at the attainment of which a Church should always aim—education, spiritual supervision, and public worship. It will be clear, therefore, to all present that if these societies were perfectly developed and powerfully supported, they would greatly increase the influence of the Church of England in these three counties ; and I conclude that none of those who now hear me will deny that increasing the influence of the Church of England is a means of promoting the welfare of our population, both here and hereafter. Are these societies, then, perfectly developed

and powerfully supported? That, I apprehend, is the question which we are called upon to consider to-day. We do not assemble merely to bear a report or to audit an account, but rather to reflect and confer upon the condition of these societies; to see whether they completely effect their object, and, above all, whether it is in our power to augment their efficiency.

I will take in the first instance the Diocesan Board of Education. I look upon the constitution of that board as most wise, especially in introducing a due proportion of the lay element into its management. I regard the administration of that board, thus constituted, as admirably effective. Yet what do I find? Why, that its efforts are sustained by an annual subscription clearly inadequate to its purpose, and even of that inadequate subscription two-thirds are actually contributed by the clergy themselves. The venerable archdeacon has referred to some possible expression of mine to-day on the important subject of national education, and on the changes which have recently been introduced with respect to it. Neither upon that subject nor upon any other will I now make a controversial remark, but will rather content myself with merely repeating to-day the opinion I have long entertained—viz, that it is impossible that the education of the people of this country can be extended too far if it be founded on sound principles, and that in proportion as it is so extended the influence of the Church of England will be increased. Well, let me now look at the position of the other two societies—the one for building and restoring churches, the other for supplying additional spiritual aid to parishes. What do I find there? Why, that there are demands upon both of these institutions which their resources cannot meet, and that even these scanty resources, I am sorry to hear, are anticipated. That is not, in my mind, an entirely satisfactory state of affairs. When we consider what is the practical object which these societies are instituted to accomplish, I think there are none present who will not concur in that remark. We live in a diocese remarkable for its large parishes, its scattered population, and its numerous hamlets. It is of all dioceses in England the one, perhaps, that most requires this collateral assistance and ancillary aid. Where there is a

Church there is a school ; where there is a Church there is one being at least whose duty it is to console and to civilise. I am certainly not going to question the conclusion which has been drawn by the venerable archdeacon in the resolution which he has proposed ; indeed, I have risen to second it. I will not for a moment controvert the proposition that these diocesan societies have aided, and greatly aided, the action of the Church in this diocese ; the details we have listened to to-day satisfactorily prove that ; but we have to consider whether the support which those societies have given to the action of the Church in this diocese is sufficient, whether it can be increased, and whether the advantages which have been attained are not rather an incentive to animate us to obtain greater results and to accomplish greater conclusions.

Upon an occasion like the present, when we are met not merely to indulge in idle phrases and conventional congratulations, but rather to examine the condition of these important societies—although I am perfectly justified in supporting this resolution,—I should conceal my own convictions if I did not confess that it does appear to me that the results of these societies do not offer that due relation which they ought to bear to the wealth, intelligence, and sound Churchmanship of the diocese. What is the cause of this—for I apprehend there must be a cause for a consequence of such importance ? There is no want of Churchmen in the diocese of Oxford, and, even in the presence of my Lord Bishop, I cannot refrain from remembering with pride that of all dioceses in England it is one remarkable for the zeal and ability with which it is administered. There is no want of Churchmen in the diocese of Oxford, but that is wanting in the diocese of Oxford which is wanting in the country generally—namely, union among Churchmen. Until union among Churchmen is accomplished, I feel persuaded that the action of these important societies and the good which they can do—being in themselves, in my opinion, incalculable and illimitable—will be an influence which, unfortunately, can be calculated, and will be limited.

I propose to-day, with great brevity, to try whether we cannot come to some understanding upon this important point,—to

inquire why there is a want of union among Churchmen, what are the feelings which cause it, and whether there is not some common ground upon which Churchmen of all sections may meet together. If we can come to some satisfactory resolution upon this point, then I do not believe but that that increased and powerful support will be given to these diocesan societies which the right reverend prelate in the chair so ardently wishes for, and that those results will be accomplished which every sincere Churchman and every lover of his country must desire. This want of union among Churchmen in this country—and I apprehend this country is a fair picture of the country generally—appears to me to arise from three feelings, which in different degrees influence different sections of Churchmen. I would describe them as a feeling of perplexity, a feeling of distrust, and a feeling of discontent.

The feeling of perplexity, I am told, arises from what is usually styled the state of parties in the Church, which, from their apparently opposite courses, distract and enfeeble the efforts of Churchmen. This feeling appears to me to be entirely without foundation. Parties have always existed in the Church of England. Nay, more, there never has been a Christian Church, even those which have most affected the character of unity, in which parties have not equally prevailed. But there is this peculiarity in the Church of England, that parties within it have been always permitted, nay, recognised and sanctioned. Our Church, always catholic and expansive in its character, has ever felt that the human mind was a manifold quality, and that some men must be governed by enthusiasm, and some controlled by ceremony. Happy the land where there is an institution which prevents enthusiasm from degenerating into extravagance, and ceremony from being degraded into superstition! No doubt, during the last thirty years there have been periods of excess on both sides. But in such great matters we cannot draw a general conclusion from so limited an observation, and the aggregate of experience, in my opinion, fully justifies the conviction that parties in the Church are not a sign of its weakness, but rather a symbol of its strength.

I come now to the feeling of distrust among Churchmen

That, I hesitate not to say, is mainly attributable to the speculations on sacred things which have been recently published by certain clergymen of our Church. I deeply regret that publication. For the sake of the writers—for no other reason. I am myself in favour of free inquiry on all subjects, civil and religious, with no condition but that it be pursued with learning, argument, and conscience. But then I think we have a right to expect that free inquiry should be pursued by free inquirers. And in my opinion, the authors of 'Essays and Reviews' have entered into engagements with the people of this country quite inconsistent with the views advanced in those prolusions. The evil is not so much that they have created a distrust in things; that might be removed by superior argument and superior learning. The evil is that they have created a distrust in persons, and that is a sentiment which once engendered is not easily removed, even by reason and erudition. Setting, however, aside the characters of the writers, I am not disposed to evade the question whether the work itself is one which should justify distrust among Churchmen. Perhaps it may not be altogether unsuitable that a layman should make a remark upon this subject, and that the brunt of comment should not always be borne by clergymen. Now, the volume of 'Essays and Reviews,' generally speaking, is founded on the philosophical theology of Germany. What is German theology? It is of the greatest importance that clearer ideas should exist upon this subject than I find generally prevail in most assemblies of my countrymen. About a century ago, German theology, which was mystical, became by the law of reaction, critical. There gradually arose a school of philosophical theologians, which introduced a new system for the interpretation of Scripture. Accepting the sacred narrative without cavil, they explained all the supernatural incidents by natural causes. This system in time was called Rationalism, and, supported by great learning, and even greater ingenuity, in the course of half a century absorbed the opinion of all the intellect of Germany, and indeed greatly influenced that of every Protestant community. But where now is German Rationalism, and where are its results? They are erased from the intellectual tablets of living opinion.

A new school of German theology then arose, which, with profound learning and inexorable logic, proved that Rationalism was irrational, and successfully substituted for it a new scheme of Scriptural interpretation called the mythical. But if the mythical theologians triumphantly demonstrated, as they undoubtedly did, that Rationalism was irrational, so the mythical system itself has already become a myth; and its most distinguished votaries, in that spirit of progress which, as we are told, is the characteristic of the nineteenth century, and which generally brings us back to old ideas, have now found an invincible solution of the mysteries of existence in a revival of Pagan Pantheism. That, I believe, is a literally accurate sketch of the various phases through which the intellect of Germany has passed during the last century. Well, I ask, what has the Church to fear from speculations so overreaching, so capricious, and so self-destructive? And why is society to be agitated by a volume which is at the best a second-hand medley of these contradictory and discordant theories? No religious creed was ever destroyed by a philosophical theory; philosophers destroy themselves. Epicurus was as great a man, I apprehend, as Hegel; but it was not Epicurus who subverted the religion of Olympus. But, it may be said, are not such lucubrations to be noticed and answered? Both—I reply. Yet I may observe in passing, that those who answer them should remember that hasty replies always assist well-matured attacks. Let them be answered, then, by men equal to the occasion, and I doubt not that many such will come forward. That a book of that character, written by clergymen of the Church of England, should pass unnoticed by authority would have been most inconsistent. The conduct of Convocation in this matter appeared to me to be marked by all that discretion and sound judgment which have distinguished its proceedings ever since its revival, and which are gradually, but surely, obtaining for it public confidence. It denounced what it deemed pestilent heresies, but it did not counsel the prosecution of the heretics. And here I am bound to say that I wish this frank and reasonable course had been followed in high places. The wisest of men has said, ‘For everything there is

a season ;' and the nineteenth century appears to me a season when the Church should confute error, and not punish it.

Having touched upon the causes of perplexity and distrust, I will now say a word upon the third cause of the want of union among Churchmen—the feeling of discontent. That is a feeling which prevails among a certain body of our brethren, who entertain what are deemed by some exalted notions respecting ecclesiastical affairs. I know that recent appointments to high places in the Church, and other public circumstances, in their opinion equally opposed to the spread and spirit of sound Church principles, have made some look without any enthusiasm on the connection between Church and State, and even contemplate without alarm the possible disruption of that union. It is impossible to speak of those who hold these opinions without respect, and I would say even affection, for we all of us to a great degree must share in the sentiments of those who entertain these opinions, though we may not be able to sanction their practical conclusions. But I think myself that these opinions rest on a fallacy, and that fallacy consists in assuming that if the dissolution of the tie between Church and State took place, the Church would occupy that somewhat mediæval position which, no doubt, in its time was highly advantageous to Europe, and to no country more than to England. My own opinion differs from theirs. I do not believe that in this age or in this country the civil power would ever submit to a superior authority, or even brook a rival. I foresee, if that were to take place, controversy and contest between Church and State as to their reciprocal rights and duties ; possible struggle, probable spoliation. I, for one, am not prepared to run such hazards. I should grieve to see this great Church of England, this centre of light, learning, and liberty, sink into a position, relative to the nation, similar to that now filled by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, or possibly even subside into a fastidious, not to say finical, congregation.

I hold that the connection between Church and State is one which is to be upheld and vindicated on principles entirely in unison with the spirit of the age, with the circumstances with which we have to deal, and with the soundest principles

of political philosophy. The most powerful principle which governs man is the religious principle. It is eternal and indestructible, for it takes its rise in the nature of human intelligence, which will never be content till it penetrates the origin of things and ascertains its relations to the Creator—a knowledge to which all who are here present well know that unaided, and alone, human intelligence can never attain. A wise Government, then, would seek to include such an element in its means of influencing man, otherwise it would leave in society a principle stronger than itself, which in due season may assert its supremacy, and even, perhaps, in a destructive manner. A wise Government, allying itself with religion, would, as it were, consecrate society and sanctify the State. But how is this to be done? It is the problem of modern politics which has always most embarrassed statesmen. No solution of the difficulty can be found in salaried priesthoods and in complicated concordats. But by the side of the State of England there has gradually arisen a majestic corporation—wealthy, powerful, independent—with the sanctity of a long tradition, yet sympathising with authority, and full of conciliation, even deference, to the civil power. Broadly and deeply planted in the land, mixed up with all our manners and customs, one of the main guarantees of our local government, and therefore one of the prime securities of our common liberties, the Church of England is part of our history, part of our life, part of England itself.

It is said sometimes that the Church of England is hostile to religious liberty. As well might it be said that the monarchy of England is adverse to political freedom. Both are institutions which insure liberty by securing order. It is said sometimes that the Church in this country has proved unequal to its mission, and has failed to secure the spiritual culture of the population. It is perfectly true that within the last fifty years there has been a vast and irregular increase of our population, with which the machinery of the Church has been inadequate to cope. But the machinery of the Church, in that respect, was incomplete only, it was not obsolete. It is said that the Church has lost the great towns, unhappily,

the Church has never found the great towns. They are her future, and it will be in the great towns that the greatest triumphs of the Church will be achieved; for the greater the population and the higher the education of the people, the more they will require a refined worship, a learned theology, an independent priesthood, and a sanctuary hallowed by the associations of historic ages.

Here, then, is a common ground on which, dismissing unsubstantial and illusory feelings of perplexity, distrust, and discontent, all sections and parties of Churchmen may unite and act together in maintaining the religious settlement of this realm. Is it unnecessary? Can anyone now pretend that the union between Church and State in this country is not assailed and endangered? It is assailed in the chief place of the realm, its Parliament, and it is endangered in an assembly where, if Churchmen were united, the Church would be irresistible. Nothing can exceed the preparation, the perseverance, the ability, and, I will willingly admit, the conscience with which the assault upon the Church is now conducted in the House of Commons. Churchmen would do wrong to treat lightly these efforts, because they believe that they are only the action of a minority in the country. The history of success is the history of minorities. During the last session of Parliament alone a series of Bills was introduced, all with various specific objects, but all converging to the same point—an attack upon the authority of the Church and the most precious privileges of Churchmen. Our charities are assailed; even our churchyards are invaded; our law of marriage is to be altered; our public worship, to use the language of our opponents, is to be ‘facilitated.’ Finally, the sacred fabrics of the Church are no longer to be considered national. It is true that all these efforts were defeated. But how defeated? By a strain upon the vigilance and energy of those who repelled the attack, which cannot be counted on hereafter, unless Churchmen, and the country generally, come forward to assist us.

I said that there should not be a subject to-day on which I would make a controversial remark, and I am not going to

depart from that rule, though I am going to make a remark on the subject of church-rates. My opinions on church rates are well known. I hold that the carrying of a measure for the total and unconditional abolition of church rates would be a signal blow to the alliance between Church and State, and that under no conceivable circumstances—at least, under no circumstances that I can conceive—should it be conceded. But there is a general opinion that legislation on the subject of church-rates is necessary and desirable, and that, without any relinquishment of principle, the law may be improved and adapted to existing circumstances. Be it so: only this I would venture to impress most earnestly on all Churchmen who may be present—and perhaps I may presume to say, on some who are not here—that if there is to be legislation on church rates, none can be satisfactory which is not introduced with the authority of Her Majesty's Government. Sure I am that no member of Parliament, whether he sits in the Lords or the Commons, can, with his own resources and on his own responsibility, succeed in such an enterprise. It would lead only to renewed defeat and increased disaster. The subject is at present in that position that the Government of this country is most happily placed in regard to it if it wishes to legislate. One-half of the House of Commons sitting opposite to them will support any just measure, waving any points of difference on matters of detail among themselves, and therefore it is in the power of the Government to secure a huge majority on the subject. I think myself, on the whole, that it is now their duty to deal with it. The question of church-rates is the great domestic question of the day, and it ought not to be left in the position which it now occupies, after what has occurred in the two Houses of Parliament of late years. The very fact that opinion in the House of Commons is against the Government is equally divided, and that in the other House of Parliament there is an overwhelming majority against any rash and unconditional change, indicates that it is the duty of those who are responsible for the good government of the country to come forward with all the authority of an administration to offer their opinion on the question and to act upon it.

I would venture, my Lord Bishop, to ask your permission to offer one observation on this subject, which I hope those Churchmen who minister to us in things sacred will not think presumptuous. I am myself, I need hardly say, in public life a party man. I am not unaware of the errors and excesses which occasionally occur in party conflicts, but I have a profound conviction that in this country the best security for purity of government and for public liberty is to be found in the organised emulation of public men. Nevertheless, I have ever impressed on my clerical friends the wisdom of the utmost reserve on their part with regard to mere political questions. Not that I question their right to entertain opinions on all public questions, and to act upon them. An English clergyman is an English gentleman and an English citizen. But I have always felt that in proportion to their political activity will the integrity of their spiritual and social influence be diminished ; and I think that influence of far greater importance than their political activity. But there is a limit to this reserve. What I would presume to recommend is this :—When institutions are in question, and not individuals, the clergy ought to interfere ; and when, of all institutions, that to which they are specially devoted, and on which their daily thoughts and nightly meditations should be fixed, is at stake, their utmost vigilance and determination should be summoned. When the interests of the Church, of which they are the sacred ministers, are concerned, the clergy would be guilty of indefensible apathy if they remained silent and idle. The clergy of the Church of England have at this moment one of the greatest and most glorious opportunities for accomplishing a great public service that was probably ever offered to any body of public men. It is in their power to determine and to insure that Church questions in this country shall no longer be party questions. They, and they alone, can effect this immense result, and that by a simple process—I mean by being united. Let them upon general public affairs entertain that which I trust they always will entertain as free Englishmen, their own general opinions. Let them be banded in the two great historical parties in the State, Whig or Tory. It would be a very unfortunate thing for this

depart from that rule, though I am going to make a remark on the subject of church-rates. My opinions on church-rates are well known. I hold that the carrying of a measure for the total and unconditional abolition of church rates would be a signal blow to the alliance between Church and State, and that under no conceivable circumstances—at least, under no circumstances that I can conceive—should it be conceded. But there is a general opinion that legislation on the subject of church rates is necessary and desirable, and that, without any relinquishment of principle, the law may be improved and adapted to existing circumstances. Be it so, only this I would venture to impress most earnestly on all Churchmen who may be present—and perhaps I may presume to say, on some who are not here—that if there is to be legislation on church rates, none can be satisfactory which is not introduced with the authority of Her Majesty's Government. Sure I am that no member of Parliament, whether he sits in the Lords or the Commons, can, with his own resources and on his own responsibility, succeed in such an enterprise. It would lead only to renewed defeat and increased disaster. The subject is at present in that position that the Government of this country is most happily placed in regard to it if it wishes to legislate. One-half of the House of Commons sitting opposite to them will support any just measure, waiving any points of difference on matters of detail among themselves, and therefore it is in the power of the Government to secure a large majority on the subject. I think myself, on the whole, that it is now their duty to deal with it. The question of church-rates is the great domestic question of the day, and it ought not to be left in the position which it now occupies, after what has occurred in the two Houses of Parliament of late years. The very fact that opinion in the House of Commons is against the Government is equally divided, and that in the other House of Parliament there is an overwhelming majority against any rash and unconditional change, indicates that it is the duty of those who are responsible for the good government of the country to come forward, and with all the authority of an administration to offer their opinion on the question and to act upon it.

I would venture, my Lord Bishop, to ask your permission to offer one observation on this subject, which I hope those Churchmen who minister to us in things sacred will not think presumptuous. I am myself, I need hardly say, in public life a party man. I am not unaware of the errors and excesses which occasionally occur in party conflicts, but I have a profound conviction that in this country the best security for purity of government and for public liberty is to be found in the organised emulation of public men. Nevertheless, I have ever impressed on my clerical friends the wisdom of the utmost reserve on their part with regard to mere political questions. Not that I question their right to entertain opinions on all public questions, and to act upon them. An English clergyman is an English gentleman and an English citizen. But I have always felt that in proportion to their political activity will the integrity of their spiritual and social influence be diminished; and I think that influence of far greater importance than their political activity. But there is a limit to this reserve. What I would presume to recommend is this:—When institutions are in question, and not individuals, the clergy ought to interfere; and when, of all institutions, that to which they are specially devoted, and on which their daily thoughts and nightly meditations should be fixed, is at stake, their utmost vigilance and determination should be summoned. When the interests of the Church, of which they are the sacred ministers, are concerned, the clergy would be guilty of indefensible apathy if they remained silent and idle. The clergy of the Church of England have at this moment one of the greatest and most glorious opportunities for accomplishing a great public service that was probably ever offered to any body of public men. It is in their power to determine and to insure that Church questions in this country shall no longer be party questions. They, and they alone, can effect this immense result, and that by a simple process—I mean by being united. Let them upon general public affairs entertain that which I trust they always will entertain as free Englishmen, their own general opinions. Let them be banded in the two great historical parties in the State, Whig or Tory. It would be a very unfortunate thing for this

country if in any great body of respectable men there should ever cease to be such differences of political opinion. But let them say that Church questions are not questions which they will permit to enter the province of political party. If the clergy are united in that determination, rest assured that the laity will soon become united too, and we shall be spared hereafter the frightful anomaly of seeing conscientious Churchmen recording their votes and exerting their influence against the Church. Depend upon it that nothing in this country can resist Churchmen when united; and if they are only united on Church questions, they will add immensely to the strength of good government and to the general welfare of the people. Then I believe that these admirable institutions, the object of which is to ameliorate the whole body of society, will assume that character in their action which is so devoutly to be desired—then the great aims of the Church, the Education of the People, their perfect spiritual Supervision, the completion of our Parochial System, and, above all, the free and decorous Worship of the Almighty, will be securely effected.

My Lord Bishop, I am sometimes apt to think that there is nothing unsuitable in this diocese taking the lead in bringing about such a result, not merely because it is presided over by one who possesses that energy of character and that fertility of resource which indicate his capacity for dealing with great affairs, but also for other reasons. The two things which Englishmen love most are religion and liberty. Now, in this diocese over which you rule are included those districts which in the history of this country are most memorable for sacred learning and for public spirit. May their united influence guide your lordship and your clergy at this grave and critical moment in the history of the Church, and you will prove a shining light and a powerful example to other dioceses; and then we need not despair, under the favour of Divine Providence, of seeing the Church of England for ever established on the catholic sympathies of an enlightened and religious people.

THE FUTURE POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

[Speech delivered at a public meeting in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Society for the Augmentation of Small Benefices, held at High Wycombe, Thursday, October 30, 1862.]

MY LORD BISHOP, I rise to second the resolution moved by the Archdeacon of Buckingham. He has placed the scope of the question so fully before this meeting that it is unnecessary for me to dilate upon it in detail. The condition of the mass of the benefices in this diocese is not satisfactory; but I hope that the result of this meeting, and the result of many meetings like the present throughout the country, will prove that we have no cause for despondency. No doubt for a long time a very erroneous impression has subsisted as to the remuneration received by the clergy of our Church, and the amount of property which it possesses. I think that time has to a certain degree removed this false impression; but when errors have long prevailed, and have been made use of for hostile purposes, it is difficult entirely to remove their first consequences. The fact is that the clergy of the Church of England are a poor clergy, and not a rich clergy; and it is for the sake of the country, not principally for the sake of the clergy, that I venture to lay down that we should take care that the clergy should be fairly remunerated. If you wish to engage the highest education and the highest sense of duty in the performance of the sacred offices of the Church, it is most inexpedient that you should offer to those from whom you expect such a high fulfilment, rewards and remunerations which no class of society in service would accept.

With regard to the present excellent association, which is in its infancy, I may remark it has already effected some good. Of the small livings in this county, although we have only

laboured one year, twenty-two have received some aid, and I observe of the e twenty-two there are eleven of which the highest do not exceed 80*l.* per annum, while the lowest is under 50*l.* a year. Indeed, it is a fact, which will no longer be disputed, that the clergy of our Church, who have been so long described as a wealthy and an over-proud clergy, contribute to the service of the Church from their private resources more than they receive from it. I believe that it is now on record that of their income at least two-thirds is provided from their own private resources. Well, that is not a position of affairs which is honourable to the country. But I do not wish to recommend the cause which I am advocating to-day upon a mere sentimental plea. It is not merely that it is not honourable to the country, but it is highly disadvantageous to the country. If it be of the first importance that the highest education, and men who are impressed with the highest sense of duty should be engaged in the ministration of our sacred offices, we cannot expect such a result—it would be foreign to the principles of human nature—if we hold out to them none of those inducements which animate the other classes of mankind.

It is not surprising that the Church of England should be a poor Church, because the Church in this country has been despoiled. That is not a fate peculiar to the Church of England. Other Churches too have been despoiled; but there is a peculiarity with regard to our Church in this matter. In other countries, when the Church has been deprived by the State of its property, at least that property has been applied to public and national purposes. That has not been the case of the Church in England. The property of the Church in England has been granted by despots and tyrants to their minions, and has been made the foundation and establishment of powerful families, who, by virtue of that property, and not from any public services of their own, have had for generations a great portion of the government of this country and of its power and patronage. Well, I find in these circumstances of aggravation in the case of the spoliation of the Church in this country, compared with the spoliation of Churches in other countries,

circumstances of consolation and hope; because we live in an age when communities are governed by the influence of opinion, and when individuals are regulated in their conduct to a great degree by the influence of conscience. I cannot but believe that the estimable descendants of those original appropriators of Church property, when they learn—and in a country of free discussion like the present they must now all of them be well informed upon that subject—that men of the highest education, who, from a sense of duty and devotion, dedicate their lives to comforting the people, receive for their labours stipends which even menials would refuse—I cannot but believe the estimable descendants of those original appropriators, in the satiety of their splendour, must feel an impulse that will make them apply a portion of that property, ages ago thus unjustly obtained, to purposes of a character which society would recognise, and by its approbation reward. And I think, my lord, that what we have heard to-day, and what we know of the action of this Society, justifies that expectation. What the archdeacon has just mentioned in the instance of our highly esteemed neighbour, Lord Howe, is a most gratifying case; and I learn that shortly after the formation of this Society—it is but due to the Duke of Bedford to mention it—a communication was received from his Grace, couched in a spirit worthy of his high position, which showed that he completely recognised the justice of the principle I have indicated. His Grace feels it to be his duty, as it has been his performance, with respect to miserably paid livings on his own estate, possessing, as it is well known his family does, large ecclesiastical property, to raise all the low livings to an amount which is at least adequate to sustain a clergyman who is performing parochial duty. Well, then, I say we have a right to expect—and I am more sanguine than the archdeacon on that head—that a portion of the property which was alienated from the Church, under circumstances which could not prevail and be justified in the present age, will yet find its way to the increase of these livings.

But I should not be acting with candour to your lordship if I concealed my opinion that there is little hope of any large action on the part of the class to which I have referred in this

respect, or, indeed, I will say, that there is much hope of any great exertion being made by the laity and the Church generally, unless the Church itself takes a more definite and determined position than it has occupied during the last five-and-twenty years. During that period there has been a degree of perplexity and of hesitation—I will say even of inconsistency—in the relations between the Church and the nation, that has damped the valour and depressed the energies of Churchmen. I think it is not difficult to indicate the probable cause of that conduct, and it is only by ascertaining it that we can perhaps supply the remedy which may remove those injurious consequences.

Society in this country is now established upon the principle of civil and religious liberty, and, in my opinion, it is impossible—and if possible, not desirable—to resist the complete development of that principle. At the same time, you have a Church established by law—that is to say, a National Church, and there is an apparent inconsistency in the principle which you have adopted as the foundation of your social system and the existence of that Established Church; because the principle of civil and religious liberty has placed legislative power in the hands of great bodies of the people who are not in communion with that Church, and they have used that power during the last five-and-twenty years, with caution at first, with much deliberation at first, but, as time advanced, with more boldness and with more energy, till, within the last few years, they have made an avowed attack upon that Church, an attack which they have conducted with great ability and with great courage. That being the case, you have what has occurred during the last quarter of a century, you have an apparent want of sympathy between that which, by the Constitution, is the National Church and a great portion of the nation—a state of affairs which is to be highly deprecated.

Twenty years ago, when this inconvenience was first generally felt, ardent Churchmen, as sincere Churchmen as ever lived, thought they had found a solution for this difficulty by terminating the union between Church and State. They said, ‘Terminate the union between Church and State, as the whole

of the nation is no longer in communion with the Church, and you will put an end to the dissatisfaction that partially, but to a considerable degree, prevails.' That, no doubt, is a very plausible suggestion, and one that has been accepted by ingenuous and able minds; but if it is examined into, it will be found one that may lead to results very different from those which are anticipated by the persons who are favourable to it, and results perhaps unsatisfactory and injurious to the country; because it cannot be supposed for a moment that in this age the civil power will tolerate an *imperium in imperio*, and allow a great corporation, in possession of vast property—for the property is considerable, though, if distributed, it may not offer adequate compensation to those who are labouring in its service—to act in independence of the State. Therefore, there is no concealing it from ourselves that it would soon end in another spoliation, and the Church would be left without the endowment of the estates which it at present possesses. The principles of Divine truth, I admit, do not depend upon property; but the circulation of the principles of Divine truth, by human machinery, depends upon property for its organisation. And there is no doubt that, deprived of the means by which the Divine instruction which it affords to the people is secured, the Church would of course lose immensely in its efficiency.

But in the case of the Church of England, it is not merely the question of the loss of its property, but it is also a question of the peculiar character of that property. The property of the Church of England is territorial. It is so distributed throughout the country that it makes that Church, from the very nature of its tenure, a National Church; and the power of the Church of England does not depend merely on the amount of property it possesses, but, in a very great degree, on the character and kind of that property. Then, I say, the result would be that the Church, deprived of its status, would become merely an episcopal sect in this country; and, in time, it is not impossible it might become an insignificant one. But that is not the whole, or, perhaps, even the greatest evil that might arise from the dissolution of the connection between

Church and State, because in the present age the art of government becomes every day more difficult, and no Government will allow a principle so powerful as the religious principle to be divorced from the influences by which it regulates the affairs of a country. What would happen? Why, it is very obvious what would happen. The State of England would take care, after the Church was spoiled, to enlist in its service what are called the ministers of all religions. The ministers of all religions would be salaried by the State, and the consequences of the dissolution of the alliance between Church and State would be one equally disastrous to the Churchman and to the Nonconformist. It would place the ministers of all spiritual influences under the control of the civil power, and it would in reality effect a revolution in the national character. In my opinion, it would have even a most injurious effect upon the liberties of the country, and I cannot believe that after the thought and discussion that have been devoted to the subject for now the twenty years since it was first mooted by ardent and sincere men—I cannot believe there can be among those who have well considered it, any great difference of opinion, but that all men—I would say the Churchman, the Dissenter, the Philosopher—would shrink from a solution of the difficulty by such means.

Well, then, what would you do? I maintain that you have only one alternative, that if you do not favour a dissolution of the union of Church and State, you must assert the Nationality of the Church of England.

I know it will be said, 'Assert the Nationality of the Church in a nation where there are millions not in communion with the Church?' These are words easy to use, but practically what would be the consequence of a mere phrase? Well I think that is a point worthy of some grave consideration, and in the first place it is expedient to ascertain, What is the character of those—I will acknowledge it—millions who are not in communion with the Church? They consist of two classes. They consist of those who dissent from the Church, and of those who are indifferent to the Church, but these classes are very unequally divided.

Now, the history of English Dissent will always be a memorable chapter in the history of the country. It displays many of those virtues—I would say most of those virtues—for which the English character is distinguished—earnestness, courage, devotion, conscience; but one thing is quite clear: that in the present day the causes which originally created Dissent no longer exist; while, which is of still more importance, there are now causes in existence opposed to the spread of Dissent. I will not refer to the fact that many, I believe the great majority, of the families of the descendants of the original Puritans and Presbyterians have merged in the Church of England itself; but no man can any longer conceal from himself that the tendency of this age is not that all creeds and Churches and consistories should combine—I do not say *that*, mind—but do say that the tendency of the present age is, that all Churches, creeds, and consistories should cease hereafter from any internecine hostility. That is a tendency which it is impossible for them to resist: and therefore, so far as the spread of dissent, of mere sincere religious dissent, is concerned, I hold that it is of a very limited character, and there is nothing in the existence of it which should prevent the Church of England from asserting her nationality. For observe, the same difficulties that are experienced by the Church are also experienced by the Dissenters, without the advantage which the Church possesses, in her discipline, learning, and tradition.

But I come now to the more important consideration; I come to the second division of the English population that is not in communion with the Church of England. And here I acknowledge that at first the difficulty seems great, because here you do count them by millions; but, in the first place, observe that these are not Dissenters from the Church; these are not millions who have quitted the Church. There are great masses of the population who have never yet entered into communion with the Church of England. The late Archbishop of Canterbury¹, a most amiable and pious man, and by no means deficient in observation of the times, passed many of his last

¹ Archbishop Sumner, who died September 2, 1862, only about two months before the delivery of this speech.

years in anxious perplexity about the anomalous position of that National Church of which he was the Primate. I was a member of a committee formed of members of the two Houses of Parliament, who had to confer together upon the conduct to be pursued in the Houses of Lords and Commons by the friends of the Church, upon some momentous questions in which the interests and the character of the Church were concerned. The Archbishop of Canterbury was our Chairman, and in every instance when we had to confer together, the late Archbishop always counselled surrender, and surrender without conditions. Fortunately, there were other opinions upon that committee, and I am glad to say that in every instance the late Archbishop of Canterbury was out-voted. It so happened that in all these cases, when they were brought before the Houses of Parliament for decision, it was proved that the opinion of the Archbishop had been erroneous, and that he had miscalculated the feeling in favour of the Church which existed in the country, because the decision of the Houses of Parliament, and especially the House of Commons, is only a reflection upon such subjects of the feeling of the country. The year before the Archbishop died, he did me the honour of seeking a conversation with me, and the object of that conversation was to explain the course he had taken with regard to these questions, in which he admitted that, so far as recent occurrences were concerned, he had been mistaken, but he said, ‘Although I may have formed an erroneous judgment, and although I admit you and your friends were right in your view of the case, still I went upon a great fact. My conduct was based upon a great fact, which no one can deny, and it is this,—No one can deny that the population has outgrown the Church.’ No one can deny that. I do not deny it, but I draw from that fact a conclusion exactly opposite to that of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. My inference is the very reverse of the one which he drew, and the conduct which he consequently recommended.

If, indeed, the Church of England were in the same state as the pagan religion was in the time of Constantine, if her altars were pining before the Divine splendour of inspired shrines, it might be well, indeed, for the Church and for the

ministers of the Church to consider the course that they should pursue; but nothing of the kind is the case. You have to deal, so far as regards the millions who are not in communion with the Church, and whom I will describe, distinguishing them from the Dissenters, as those who are indifferent to the Church—you are dealing with millions of the English people. And who are the English people? The English people are, without exception, the most enthusiastic people in the world. There are more excitable races. The French, the Italians, are much more excitable; but for deep and fervid feeling, there is no race in the world at all equal to the English. And what is the subject, of all others, upon which the English people have always been most enthusiastic? Religion. The notes on the gamut of their feeling are few, but they are deep. Industry, Liberty, Religion, form the solemn scale. Industry, Liberty, Religion—that is the history of England. Now, upon these three subjects they have periods of exaltation. They have had periods of deep feeling within our own experience, alike with regard to *toil* and with regard to *freedom*; and it is not impossible, nay, I would not hesitate to say there may be many in this room who may witness a period of exaltation in the public mind of the country, and especially among these millions, with regard to *religion*, that has certainly not been equalled in our times, or in the times of our fathers. But what an opportunity is that for a Church! When great bodies of the nation, who have never been in communion with the Church, have their minds, their feelings, and their passions, all exalted in the direction of religion, and influenced by the religious principle, what an opportunity for a Church, with her learning, her organisation, and the ineffable influences of her tradition, with her sacred services, with her divine offices, with all the beauty of holiness in which she worships, to advance and address them! What an immense field for any Church! But what a field for a corporation which is not merely a Church, but which is the Church of England; blending with divine instruction the sentiment of patriotism, and announcing herself, not only as the Church of God, but as the Church of the Country! I say that, with

these views, instead of supposing that the relations which exist between a large body of our fellow-subjects and the Church—relations at this moment of indifference and even of alienation—are causes why the Church should not assert her Nationality, they are causes and circumstances which peculiarly call upon the Church to exert herself; and to prepare for a coming future which will demand her utmost energies, as I believe it will yield her greatest rewards.

I know it may be said that this is a practical country; and though this view of the character of the English people may be abstractedly just, and though the advice which you give may be generally well founded, still what are the practical measures by which the Nationality of the Church may be asserted? I do not think we ought to blink the question, and in considering those means, I am brought intimately and nearly to the resolution that is in my hand. It would not be convenient for me now to enter at any great length into a subject of this kind; but inasmuch as it is utterly impossible that we ever can put societies of this character upon the foundation that we desire, and infuse into them the spirit which is necessary, without a clear conception of what the conduct and the career of the Church should be, I will briefly advert to some of them, especially as they all, to a certain degree, refer to the cause of our meeting to-day.

Well, then, if I am to consider what are the means by which the Nationality of the Church may be asserted, I say, certainly, in the first place—it is hardly necessary for me to say that—the Church should educate the people. But though we have lived during the last quarter of a century in times not very favourable to the Church; though the Church has gone through great trials during that period, and has trials even at the present moment, not merely from its avowed enemies, still I think the Church may congratulate herself upon the whole on what she has accomplished in the education of the people. It is possible that the means which have been at the command of the Church may be reduced. It is possible that there may be fresh assaults and attacks upon the machinery by which the State has assisted the Church in that great effort; but I think

that no impartial man can shut his eyes to the conviction that the Church of England during the last five-and-twenty years has obtained a command over the education of the people, which fifty years ago could not have been contemplated, and so much having been done, we have no right to believe that the command will be diminished. On the contrary, whatever may be the conduct of the State, I express my belief, that the influence of the Church over the education of the people will increase. Well, so far, on that head, the result is favourable.

There is another important means by which the Nationality of the Church may be, in my opinion, asserted. It is one on which there is controversy; but it is only by controversy that truth is elicited and established. I am in favour, not of any wild, indiscriminate, or rashly-adopted, but, on the contrary, of a moderate and well-considered, extension of the Episcopate. And I form my opinion upon the advantages that would arise from an extension of that character, from the consequences of the extension of the Episcopate to our colonies, which have been signal, and, to a considerable degree, upon the consequences that have resulted from the establishment of the two new dioceses in England. In the diocese of Ripon, I think, the effects have been very considerable. More might have been done in the diocese of Manchester, where the occasion was golden; but something has been gained, and at least we have the consolation of hoping that a glorious future there awaits us.

Then there is a third means and measure by which, I think, the Nationality of the Church of England may be asserted; and that is by a further development of the lay element in the administration of affairs which are not of a spiritual character. We must erase from the mind of the country the idea that the Church of England is a clerical corporation. The Church of England is a national corporation, of which the clerical element, however important, is only a small element; and except—a great exception no doubt—the ministering to us of sacred things, there is nothing that concerns the Church in which it is not alike the privilege and the duty of laymen to take an

active part. Now, I believe, if such a prudent development of the lay element in the management of the affairs of the Church takes place, you will have a third great means of asserting the Nationality of the Church.

There is a fourth measure, which is, in my mind, of great importance, and that is the maintenance of the Parochial system. Unfortunately in this country, so far as the Church is concerned, very erroneous ideas exist upon the subject of our parochial constitution. In consequence of the great changes that have taken place of late years with regard to parochial administration—as, for example, mainly in the Poor Law and in some other measures—there is a too general idea that the parochial constitution has been subverted; but so far as the Church is concerned, the parochial constitution is complete and inviolate. It is not in any degree affected by any of those changes, and the right of visitation, both by the parishioner and the parish priest, remains intact; and if properly acted upon, is a source of immense and increasing influence, especially in those large towns of which we hear so much, and where the right is now considered as not even in existence.

The fifth means by which the Nationality of the Church may be asserted brings me closely to this resolution; and I mention it last, not because I think it inferior in importance to any of those which have preceded it. You must render your clergy more efficient, whether in the great towns you increase the staff of curates, which perhaps is more advantageous than building churches without making preparations for their maintenance, and still less for their endowment; or whether you avail yourselves of those means which other societies in this diocese for the increase of spiritual assistance afford; or whether, lastly and chiefly, you take the great subject in hand which has brought us together to-day, and make an effort throughout the country for putting an end to those low stipends which are now almost in mockery appended to the discharge of laborious parochial duties. I can say from my own experience, what I have no doubt many gentlemen in this room can confirm, that in innumerable cases at this moment the clergyman of the Church of England, devoting his life, his

health, the fruits of a refined education, to the service of God and the comforting of the people, is not only not remunerated, but is absolutely, by his contributions to local and parochial objects and institutions, out of pocket at the end of the year in the parish which he serves.

Well, these are five great practical means by which the nationality of the Church may be asserted. Still they are but means and machinery, and they must be inspired by that spirit of zeal and devotion which alone can ensure success, and which alone deserve success; but in the present state of this country, after the analysis of its population which I have presumed to sketch to-day, I say that a great corporation like the Church of England, where the clergy and laity act in union, may look forward, by means of measures such as I have now mentioned under these five heads, to great, triumphant, and final success.

There is only one other topic upon which I will make a remark before I conclude. It will be observed, that the five measures which I have ventured to recommend, with one exception, can be adopted by the Church without any appeal to the Legislature—a great advantage; and in the exceptional instance, namely, that which refers to the extension of the Episcopate, if an application were made to the Legislature, couched with the discretion becoming the subject, I have little doubt it would be successful. We must not shut our eyes to this fact, that the time has gone by when we could ask for new powers and privileges from Parliament to establish the position of the Church of England. That time is gone. I myself do not undervalue a public recognition of the Church by the Legislature of the country. I think its importance is great, perhaps cannot be over-estimated. I believe that in its action it gives the Church an authority with many minds which, without that position, she would not possess or exercise. It is because we believe that a public recognition of the nationality of the Church by the constitution is of that great value, that I, and others who have acted with me in that behalf, have resisted all those attacks which during the last few years in Parliament have been directed at the privileges and the public status of

the Church. We have so acted, because we believed that public status would give the Church an immense advantage when the opportunity offered of asserting her nationality. If we had not believed such would be the consequence, we should have declined contending for privileges which would otherwise be obsolete, and for a public status that was barren. But because we thought that, when the hour arrived for a great effort in the Church—and I think that hour has arrived—a public recognition by the ancient constitution of the country of her national status would be of immense advantage, and give it great vantage-ground, we made those efforts and entered into that struggle. I would venture to hope that this meeting to-day may be of some use; I will venture to hope that the effort of this diocese will be great, and that it will not be confined to this diocese. I hope we shall be no longer appalled and paralysed by indefinite estimates of the hostility and the obstacles we have to encounter. I hope, above all, that those faint-hearted among our brethren, who seem to me of late years only to be considering how they could decorously relinquish a position of great responsibility, will learn that the wisest course with regard to the Church of England, as with regard to all other cases in which a great duty is involved, is to be courageous, and endeavour to perform that duty. Then I am confident that this Church of England will show to the world that it has powers of renovation which have not been suspected by some. For my own part, I uphold it, not merely because it is the sanctuary of Divine Truth, but because I *verily believe it is our best security for that civil and religious liberty of which we hear so much, and which we are told is opposed to its institution*

ON ACT OF UNIFORMITY.

[In the House of Commons, June 9, 1863, Mr. Buxton moved the following Resolution,—‘That in the opinion of this House the subscription required from the clergy to the Thirty-nine Articles, and to the Prayer-book, ought to be relaxed.’]

THE previous question having been moved, Mr. Disraeli said,—It is with reluctance that I rise, Sir, after the very able speech of my noble friend (Lord R. Cecil), who has touched, with so much force, on many of the important topics that we have discussed this evening. But really I cannot reconcile it to myself to pass over in silence the course which the House has resolved, partly, I believe, from accident, to take this evening—a harmless one, no doubt, if followed with a clear understanding, on both sides, of the feelings and opinions under which it was adopted. I cannot myself at all agree that moving the previous question¹ was a proper mode in which to encounter the motion of the honourable member for Maidstone, and I believe that is not an opinion peculiar to myself. From circumstances of a technical and passing nature, the House has adopted that course; and my right honourable friend the member for the University of Cambridge² having acquiesced in it—I fancied with some reluctance—I do not think it becoming towards one whom I always wish to treat with that deep respect which he deserves, to disturb the arrangement at which the House has arrived. But feeling the importance of this question, and knowing that the vote given and the procedure adopted to-night may be hereafter represented to the disadvantage of those who object to the motion, I beg to say that, though, after the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the course we are about to adopt is, I am happy to believe, per-

¹ Moved by Sir George Grey.

² Mr. Walpole.

fectly harmless, and one not altogether devoid of propriety, it is not the one which I myself should have suggested. The honourable gentleman the member for the University of Dublin said he should give a cordial vote for the motion of the previous question. I have, in the course of my time, voted occasionally for the previous question, but I never gave a cordial vote for it, and, of all the motions made in this House, it is one which I should least expect, and which I have never previously known, to receive the cordial adhesion of any honourable gentleman. I should never adopt voting for the previous question as a testimony of the ardour of my feeling, or of the strength of my conviction.

This important discussion, the result of which will not pass away with the transient debate of to-night, commenced with the motion of the honourable gentleman the member for Maidstone, in which he appeared, as I understood him, to counsel the relaxation of the subscription to the Articles and the Liturgy, in deference to the overwhelming power of public opinion. The honourable gentleman feels that his case is irresistible, because he is supported and animated by the invincible power of public opinion. The honourable member for Pontefract,¹ who followed, giving a partial adhesion to the views of the honourable member for Maidstone, counselled us to take, not an identical, but a limited course in the same direction, on a ground totally adverse—namely, that public opinion cannot be trusted, that its deleterious tendencies must be fenced out and guarded against. The House, after hearing the statement of the minister, agreed not to support either the original motion or the amendment, but it consented to a course which, without explanation, gives an implied assent to the position of the honourable member for Maidstone, and also to the gentleman who proposed the amendment, by admitting that there are grounds entitling the question to the consideration of this House. Now, what are those grounds? Subscription to the Articles and to the Prayer-book is objected to—I am now trying to give a general description of the main arguments we have heard—because they are opposed to that comprehensive character which I suppose all of us are agreed that the Church

¹ Mr Monckton Milnes

should assume and maintain. No one is more in favour of the comprehensive character of the Church of England than myself; but I would make this condition—that the comprehensiveness of the Church of England should be based on Church principles. The honourable gentleman the member for Maidstone, as others before him have done, pointed out the origin of the Act of Charles II., to which he supposes such injurious effects upon the comprehensive character of the Church may be ascribed. He has shown us how many, who might be included in the pale of the Church, are no longer found in its folds; and he has denounced the ancient legislation, the consequences of which may be found in our present situation. I doubt very much the general justice of this criticism, and I doubt whether it was possible at that time, or at any time, in this country, or perhaps in any country, to prevent in matters of religion what is called Dissent. I look upon Dissent—I am sure the honourable member for Sheffield¹ will pardon me for saying it—as a weakness incident to humanity. Look at the case of the Roman Catholic religion. I will be bound I could show, if it were necessary, that there has been as much dissent, as much heresy, as much schism, in the Church of Rome as in the Church of England. But the dissent has occasionally been forcibly suppressed, the schism has in some instances been adroitly managed, and the heresy has found a safety-valve in the institution sometimes even of monastic orders. You have found this in a religion established on the principle of infallibility, and in countries where that religion has been supported by the civil power assuming, generally, an arbitrary character. What, then, can we expect in a country where, instead of infallibility, religion is founded upon the principle of free inquiry—and where, though that religion has, generally speaking, been supported by the civil power, that civil power has yet been established on the principle of civil liberty?

It is only as politicians and as statesmen that we may presume to speak in this House upon this subject, and I maintain that in modern times, since that year 1662 which has been just quoted to the House, no English statesman has ever con-

¹ Mr. G. Hadfield.

templated that the Church of England, though founded on a catholic creed, should at the same time command a catholic communion. For the last two hundred years no statesman has contemplated that the whole population of England should be within the pale of the National Church. What has been contemplated in these centuries of what I may call the practical working of our Constitution has been this—that there should be a standard of religious truth established by the State in the country; that the religious principle should be recognised as one of the most important and influential in the conduct of Government; that the Government of this country should not be reduced to a mere question of police; but that we should seek to influence the conduct of men by the highest sanction which can be conceived. Sir, I say that object has been successfully accomplished by the Church in its connection with the State in England during the last two centuries. We have to-night a new system commended to our notice, which is to bring about a state of affairs more comprehensive. The first principle of this new system is, that not only the creed of the Church should be catholic, but that the communion should be catholic, and that we should all belong to the same Church—a doctrine not very favourable at the outset to that principle of religious liberty, which, I believe, is still much esteemed in this country. When you analyse this doctrine it comes to this:—The comprehensive Church is, in fact, to be a Church founded very much on the same principles as that federal constitution of America, of which in this House we have heard so much and so often, and with regard to which recently we have witnessed such strange and startling experiences. All creeds are to belong to one Church, but all creeds are to retain their own particular opinions. But that experiment has been tried to a great degree on the Continent of Europe. You have had it in Germany; you may see its defects to a certain degree in France; and you may trace them not only in Europe, but in America. You have what without offence may be called an infidel Church, composed of various sections of the population, some of them often influenced by fanatical impulses. If on the Continent such an experiment has not been over-successful, what are our chances

of success in England, where feelings on religious subjects are so deep and enthusiastic? No one can doubt that the consequences would be of a perilous character, perhaps disastrous to the State, and entailing results which none would dare to contemplate, and all must wish to avoid. Therefore, I very much doubt whether this system of comprehension on which the relaxation of these tests is recommended is a sound one. A Church may be so comprehensive that no one may comprehend it.

It is really a question for us to consider, if this Act of Charles II., which has been so much vituperated to-night, had not been passed, what might have been the historical fortunes of this country? It is perfectly absurd to consider the Act of Uniformity in an abstract sense without reference to the spirit of the time in which it was passed, and without any relation to the events which preceded it. The honourable member for Poole (Mr. D. Seymour) told us that it was passed in a time of passion. It is very well for us to describe a period as a time of passion; but what we describe as a time of passion was, in fact, a time of feeling. Men thought and felt, and they did something. All the great things done in the history of England were done in a time of passion. If you scrutinise the means and motives by which the great statutes and the great charters of English liberties were obtained, on which were established the deep foundations of the glorious edifice of our social life, you may make as good a case out against them as against Archbishop Sheldon. Take the Grand Remonstrance. It was carried by a casting vote, or something of the sort. You might say who cares for a political document which depends on such a pedigree; and yet I do not suppose anyone would be swayed by a criticism of that sort on the great doctrines which were vindicated and upheld by the Grand Remonstrance. The language of these tests has been much criticised to-night. Some honourable gentlemen have expressed their approbation of them as a whole, but they say there is a word here which does not please them, an expression which might be altered. But is this the tone in which we ought to view the ancient documents of the nation, upon which its most important conditions depend? Take the Bill of Rights. I will be bound

to say, that if I were to give notice that on going into Committee of Supply on Friday night, I would call the attention of the House to the Bill of Rights, and made a motion upon it, I would make such a case out against the Bill of Rights by criticising its articles, that I should stand in almost as eminent a position as the honourable member for Maidstone. I dare say I should have some followers, if not many in this House, at least out of it, and no doubt it would take a position among Parliamentary questions. But I do not think that any sane man, without any reference to the justice of my criticism, would say that it was a wise thing, or for the welfare of the country, to call the Bill of Rights into question, on the contrary, I am quite sure that any person who took such a course would assume that position in political life to which he was fairly entitled. I would say, therefore, with all respect for the honourable member for Maidstone, that that part of his case which rests upon the expediency of making the Church comprehensive, and upon the injurious effect which the Act of Uniformity has had on its comprehensive character, is neither sound nor true and that, in fact, if you are to indulge in what I would presume to call *dilettante* criticism, there is scarcely any record of our rights—scarcely anything which was ever done by the great men who preceded us in this and the other House of Parliament—which may not be evilled at, questioned, and improved. But the result would be that the edifice of our rights and liberties—of our political and social life, which has been raised at so much pains and so much risk, would be reduced to nothing—it would be resolved into its original elements—the fabric would crumble into dust.

I admit that there are grave reasons for the honourable gentleman bringing forward this question, other than the argument that by relaxing the terms of subscription you may render the Church more comprehensive in her character. I have no doubt that there are reasons peculiar to the present time which act with great force, and have great influence on masses of society, more especially on that youthful portion of society to which we must look forward, whether as clergymen to continue the ministration of the offices of our Church, or as

laymen to be among its ardent supporters. The existence of these reasons has been frankly admitted to-night and especially by recent speakers. I think there is in the times in which we live a circumstance which disturbs the public mind, which has influenced the spirit of youth, and has acted very injuriously on those who would otherwise enter into holy orders. It is quite unwise to conceal it, and it is idle to explain it, as is the fashion even in high places, by statistical arguments. I do not believe that the want of candidates for ordination is to be accounted for by the enormous nuggets which are to be discovered in Australia, or by the large fortunes said to be realised by civil engineers. I believe the youth of England are actuated by more noble and generous feelings. I was myself once young, and committed many follies; but at that time of life I can most frankly declare I was not influenced by such considerations, and I believe the generation to which we look forward with hope and confidence is equally free from such degrading ideas and sordid motives. Still, it cannot be concealed that there is much in the theological studies of this country, much in the theological productions of the day, which naturally would influence and disturb the ardent and susceptible mind of youth.

The honourable gentleman who seconded the motion informed us, and I agree with him, that it is likely that for many years questions respecting the Church and religion may be brought under the consideration of the British Parliament. I trust, however, that we shall be able to discuss those questions in a manner becoming our position—that we shall remember that we are not a lay synod, but that we are the Reformed Parliament of England. I hope that when those questions come before us we shall not discuss them like those members of the Long Parliament, who on occasion pulled their thumb Bibles from their waistcoat pockets and enforced their arguments *pro* and *con.* by quoting chapter and verse. On the contrary, I hope that we shall remember the constitutional and social position which we occupy, and meet the difficulty without exciting any feelings but those which are suited to the unimpassioned sphere of the British Parliament.

But without entering into any religious controversy, I would venture to say that there is nothing very new, nothing very original, and nothing very alarming in this periodical appearance of a particular branch of literature which is supposed to have affected the opinion of the country, and to have rendered it necessary that we should suddenly and precipitately alter the Act of Uniformity. It is important that we should remember this. I would venture to say to those who are young—because, though they have devoted themselves with so much care to the cultivation of their minds, they may be pardoned for not being perfectly aware of what has happened with reference to this subject before—that there is nothing new in these doubts which have been thrown ont, and which appear to have recently agitated some portions of the public mind. A century and a half ago, at a time when England was in a state of great civilisation, these views were very prevalent in this country—much more prevalent than at present. It was a natural reaction from that immense triumph of Puritanism which had destroyed the institutions of the country, and which apparently had effected an *enduring* change in the national character. That Puritanic spirit passed away, however, and left behind, as a consequence, great latitudinarianism, ending in a general spirit of scepticism. The state of things was far more alarming then than now. The most alarming thing now, it is said, is that an infidel may be made a bishop; but infidels then were actually made bishops. There was at that time a large body of the ablest writers and most eminent men that England ever produced devoted with greater courage, and in a far more unblushing manner than is now the fashion, to the propagation of those ideas which are now circulated with more modesty, and perhaps with a more timid spirit. You had men of high position, Ministers of State, and other distinguished persons, among the educated and influential classes of society adopting these opinions in the reign of George I. What happened? A century passed away, and what permanent effect was produced by these opinions, although they produced a literature of their own, which was second to none in acuteness and learning, and although they were sanctioned by persons in

high places? What have been the consequences, I will not say to the Church of England, but to the faith accepted by that Church? Why, there never was a period in which the religion of this country, and especially the religion embodied in the offices of the Church of England, was more influential, or more expansive, or flourished more than in the century that has elapsed since that time. And I defy any one to bring me passages impugning the faith of the Scriptures in any works recently published in which these doctrines are urged with more power or more learning than by the writers of that period.

But then it may be said that England is an insular country, and that Englishmen are a peculiar people; that they have an aristocracy, and a Church possessing territorial power; that the middle classes are bigoted, and the aristocratic classes interested in preserving the Church, and that by a combination of circumstances it has happened that a natural result has not been obtained. But we have seen the same cause at work on a much larger scale, and at a period more recent, in a neighbouring country—a country that is not insular, that has destroyed its aristocracy, subverted its priesthood, plundered its Church, and left no prizes to be competed for in it. We have heard that the reason why there are less candidates for orders in the Church of England is that so many prizes have been taken away. But what happened in the Church of France when all its property had been taken? The whole institution of the laity, sacerdotal and otherwise, were crushed; yet as if by magic, parish churches have reappeared in the 80,000 dioceses of France; and although they have had no minister, employed, or stipend, and may have in the future a combination of government which is one we anticipate, yet the Christian Church in that country seems at present more powerful and more numerous adherents than ever. Therefore, I say, that it is a great mistake, and an opinion not sustained by experience, to suppose that we are encountering a novel and revolutionary change of opinion, and that, in consequence of views which have before this been admitted, have been lost, and that consequently the House of Commons is at present in a position to reverse the

title-deeds of the Church of England, and to say in this hasty moment of the introduction of a new philosophy that the measures taken by the great statesmen and Churchmen of the days of the Stuarts at an important crisis were a profound mistake, seeing that they have only secured for England two centuries of tranquillity and repose! Totally repudiating as materials for legislation on such a subject the passing accidents of the hour, which, however, naturally influence the youthful mind of the country, I will make one remark on the character of the subscription, and on the Creeds and Articles which are now brought forward as unsuited to the age in which we live, and which are regarded as so objectionable that a Ministry to whom is intrusted the defence of the institutions of the country are not resolute enough to come forward and oppose the very crude resolution before the House, but are obliged to meet it with the previous question.

I have understood from every gentleman who has spoken to-night, except the candid member for Sheffield, that he is in favour of maintaining the Established Church of this country. The advantages which accrue from the existence of the Church of England have been adverted to by different speakers; and from the honourable gentleman who introduced the motion, and the honourable member for Pontefract, who moved the amendment—I have not heard from any of the speakers any objection or insinuation against the wisdom of maintaining the Church of this country. Well, but what do you mean by a Church? I say, No Creed! no Church! How can you have a Church without a creed, articles, formularies, and a subscription? If you object to a creed, to formularies, and to articles, tell us so, and then we shall understand the question before us. We will discuss that question, and the nation must decide which side they will adopt. But if you are to have a Church, I maintain you must have symbols of union among those who are in communion with that Church. That I hope is not bigotry, for we must speak on this subject as politicians, and not intrude our private religious convictions on any member of this House, but consider this weighty matter with reference to the happiness of society, and the means of lofty and virtuous

government, by the aid of which we may prevent government from degenerating into a mere machinery of police. We are agreed, then, that we shall have a Church, and that it shall be maintained. Well, I want to know how are we to have a Church without a symbol of union among those who are in communion with it? No one has told us. If we are to have a Church without articles, creeds, or formularies, we shall have the most pernicious and the most dangerous institution which ever yet existed in any country, the means of which for evil, under the disposition of able men, are entirely incalculable. We are often favoured by the honourable member for Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate) with bulletins on the progress of Jesuitism. The Jesuits have done vast things, and we may hope that they may not rival their past achievements; but whatever conception the honourable gentleman may form of the evils which the Jesuits have inflicted or may inflict upon society, they never contemplated or acquired a more fatal influence than that which a Church may possess and must exercise in a country like England, when it is a Church without a creed, without articles, or formularies.

I would say one word on the course which the Government have taken and may take on the religious controversies before us. How ought we to act? I think that no case has been made out at present to justify the course taken by the Government. I think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer misunderstood an expression of my honourable friend the member for Stamford, when he laid it down that my honourable friend's words justified the course of the Government. I agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer—every man of temperate mind must agree with him—that neither the Articles of the Church nor the Prayer-book are perfect. There may be blots in their composition. The Prayer-book may be divine, but it is also human. But I do not see anything in the present state of affairs that justifies the course taken by Government. Suppose there were circumstances that justified the course taken by the honourable member for Maidstone. Is the course taken by the Government that which they ought to take? I do not think it is. If this House be ever of opinion that the

title deeds of the Church require to be revised, in however modified a manner, it does appear to me that the inquiry should not originate in either House of Parliament. It has been said in the course of this debate that the Act of Uniformity at present in question is an Act of Parliament, and that as it originated in Parliament, its revision and formal reconstruction ought to take place there. With regard to that, I say the character of Parliament in the reign of Charles II. and of Victoria is decidedly and essentially different. Parliament is no longer a lay synod, and therefore it cannot of right and with propriety assume such a function. No doubt, if a revision were to take place, the opinion of Parliament must ultimately be given on the general merits of the question. But it would not enter into every ecclesiastical detail and religious difference of opinion, if for no other reason, from that innate sense of propriety which always guides it. But, I say, if revision be necessary, it is from the temporal head of our Church that measure should flow, and by the Queen, and by the Queen alone, it should be indicated. A Royal Commission is the proper medium by which any change which may be necessary either in the Articles or Liturgy of the Church could alone be brought under the consideration of authority. What authority? The honourable member for Poole says, 'Who would trust the discussion of this question to Convocation?' I regret that Convocation has ever been called into existence, and I trust its attributes and functions will soon be terminated. I cannot agree with that opinion, I cannot sympathise with that. It seems to me—and I say it with the greatest courtesy—extremely bigoted and narrow-minded. Why should Convocation be silenced? Convocation is a representative body, and should therefore recommend itself to the Liberal party, it is a body which carries on its affairs by public discussion, and therefore should be regarded, I think, with some respect by those who are devoted to reformed Parliaments. And I must say this of Convocation. I admit that as at present constituted there are elements which render Convocation not altogether a satisfactory tribunal. But it does not follow that Convocation should be therefore altogether abrogated. Let

us be just to Convocation. It was recalled into existence after a long lapse of time. It was unused to the functions which it was summoned to exercise. It consisted entirely of clergymen, and loud were the predictions that it would fail, and fail ignominiously. But I ask sensible and temperate men on both sides of the House, is it fair to give that character to the labours of Convocation since it has been revived? I say myself, revived as it has been after a long desuetude, trammelled as it has been, checked and controlled as it has been in a manner that would have broken the spirit and crushed the energies of any assembly, it has done many things deserving approval, and, what is more, has done that which all predicted it would not do. in the brief term it has been permitted to exercise its powers—it has shown an extremely practical character. I would wish its basis were more comprehensive, and I cannot see how any appeal could be made to Convocation on such a question as that which has formed the subject of controversy to-night unless that basis were more comprehensive. You must associate with it the other province and the Church of Ireland, and I myself think you ought to introduce something of that lay element to which the Church of England has been so much indebted. Nor do I doubt that there are lay members of the Church at the present moment who, from their learning, their knowledge of men, and their high character, might bring to Convocation such ability and reputation as Selden and Chillingworth might have brought in former days. But if it be the opinion of Government that it is necessary to revise the Liturgy and Articles, they ought to proceed, not by moving the previous question, but by the initiatory act of the Crown whom they counsel; and after a Royal Commission had been instituted and had terminated its labours, the result might, with propriety, be submitted to a Convocation constituted on the broad basis I have indicated. It may be said these are difficult questions; but it is the province of Government to cope with difficulties; and whatever the decision arrived at might be, it would be ultimately laid before Parliament, for no one contemplates that any decision upon such subjects would be satisfactory unless Parliament were consulted.

We have heard to-night from the honourable member for Pontefract a warning not to submit to a sacerdotal despotism. I entirely agree with the honourable gentleman that no evil can perhaps be conceived for any country, but at all events none for a country like England, greater than to fall under sacerdotal despotism, or that we should be at all interfered with in our free life by any priestly power. But it appears to me that the honourable member for Pontefract has entirely misapprehended the question upon which he proposed an amendment, and which one would think he did not resolve on until he had given sufficient consideration to the subject. Sir, my idea of a sacerdotal despotism, in the times in which we live, is not that the *Inquisition* will appear in this country, or that Archbishop Laud, in the form of the mild and benignant Metropolitan of Lambeth, may summon us again to a High Commission Court. But my idea of sacerdotal despotism is this, that a minister of the Church of England, who is appointed to expound doctrine, should deem that he has a right to invent doctrine. That, Sir, is the sacerdotal despotism I fear. And it appears to me that if the course which has been recommended to our consideration to-night is adopted, in that false guise in which such propositions are sometimes exhibited in this House and out of it, we shall not be secure from arriving at such a goal. I warn the House, however improbable it may appear, from the seemingly innocent form in which these simple and enlightened propositions have been brought before us, that they are propositions in favour of the priesthood and not of the laity; and the more their consequences are traced, the more plainly that will be found to be the inevitable result. No doubt there are men of genius among the clergy, fine writers, men of learning and imagination, who can easily picture to themselves what would be the consequence of the success of these endeavours. No doubt the mere clergyman would soon become a prophet. No doubt you would have many churches, and the abounding eloquence, the exquisite learning, the fine sentiment, and the admirable ingenuity, which pervade many of the publications which are put upon our tables, would produce consequences to the Church of England very different from what have proceeded

from this reviled Act of Uniformity. But what I feel is this—if that course be pursued, I see no security for two hundred years of tranquillity and toleration. I see no security for two hundred years which have resolved as great a problem in spiritual life as we have in political. It is the boast of this country that in politics it has reconciled order with liberty. What in its religious affairs is a greater triumph than this—it has combined orthodoxy with toleration. What security have you for such results if you pursue the course which is insidiously recommended to you now in so many ways and by so many changes? I prefer to stand upon the ancient ground. I see no reason whatever why, if the occasion demands it, our attention should not be duly called to necessary changes in our Articles and Liturgy. But though I see no reason, if the occasion requires it, why that should not be done, I can most sincerely say that hitherto no satisfactory case has been made out in favour of that course. I prefer to stand as we are—on a Church which lives in the historic conscience of the country, which comes down with the title-deeds of its great Liturgy which we all can understand, because our fathers and our forefathers have contributed to its creation. Sir, I regret the course which we have taken to-night, although I trust, after this discussion, it will not be misunderstood, and that the country will feel that it is the determination of Parliament to stand in its spirit by the Church of England.

CHURCH POLICY.

[A speech delivered at Oxford at a meeting for the Augmentation of Small Benefices, the Bishop of Oxford in the chair. The date of this speech was November 25, 1864, just when 'Essays and Reviews' were at the height of their notoriety.]

MY LORD BISHOP, I can heartily second the motion that has been made by my right honourable friend, because it only expresses a resolution which, in that part of the diocese with which I am more immediately connected, and which in a certain sense, I may say, I represent to-day, I have heretofore exerted myself to the utmost to uphold. I must say, however, that though some degree of sympathy has been formed—and among some individuals that sympathy has been expressed in a manner most energetic—the general result there has not been, in my opinion, adequate to the greatness of the cause and to the character of those institutions which have been established in this diocese.

My lord, it is perhaps a delicate subject to touch upon, but it is expedient that upon this matter we should have clear ideas. These institutions, as established in this diocese, are not so fully and completely, but in some degree, I believe established in all the dioceses of England, sustain, or rather would sustain and complete, the parochial system of the country, and their object is to adapt the machinery of the Church to the ever fluctuating circumstances in the condition of the nation. There are two reasons why I think that these institutions have not yet received in the country that support which I sometimes flatter myself by foreseeing they will acquire.

In the first place, it must be remembered that these institutions are of a novel character. They have, comparatively speaking, only recently been established in the country.

In the next place—and that is a much more important circumstance, which we should clearly apprehend—these diocesan institutions have been established in England during a period in which the Church has been with reference to the State in a condition of transition. Some forty years ago, or less, a great change took place in the constitution of this country. It was, in fact, a revolution; but, like all revolutions in England, comparatively silent and perfectly tranquil. But when religious liberty was adopted as a principle in the political constitution of this country, an effect was produced immediately upon the position of the Church. That party who are opposed to the Church in this country—and we cannot flatter ourselves that there ever will be a period, in a country like England, when there will not be an anti-Church party—that party with much plausibility, for the purpose of advancing their views, called public attention to the anomaly which the Church in this country presented, the moment that the political constitution had adopted the principle of religious liberty. The Parliament of England had been a lay synod until that change, and they naturally said, if you have a Legislature in the hands of those not in communion with the Church, your boasted union between Church and State must expire, and the fall of the Church is at hand. Under these circumstances, if we had had only to meet the natural opponents of the Church I think the prospects of the Church would not have been so difficult. But unfortunately some of the best friends of the Church—men who, from their elevated character, sincere principle, learning and devotion, could not for a moment be looked upon with an eye other than friendly by the Church and Churchmen—became so alarmed by what they considered the logical consequences of that revolution, that they, although for perfectly distinct and contrary purposes, counselled the same policy as the anti-Church party: dissolution of the union between Church and State. The consequence of this state of affairs was a condition of great perplexity among Churchmen—

much timidity, painfully apparent inconsistency of conduct, sometimes apathy, because they did not know to what objects they should devote their energies; sometimes, perhaps, a fantastic and unnatural action; but the practical result was that there was no longer cordial co-operation among all classes of Churchmen for those objects in which the interests of the Church were concerned, and all those diocesan societies, so admirably adapted to the wants of the age, and which would in practice as well as in theory have completed the parochial system, were launched at a time when cordial co-operation was, for the reasons I have alleged, impossible. That is one of the many causes why these institutions have not received that support which they might have counted upon. For during this period, especially during the last few years, while the principle of religious liberty—which I am sure no Churchman now wishes to disturb or distrust—has been developed to its completeness, there was a paralysis on the united action of Churchmen.

This remarkable result, however, happened—which, indeed, in matters of this character and import, has happened before in this country—the question of Church and State has been so discussed by the nation generally; it has been so deliberated upon, so considered and pondered, that the country has arrived at a conclusion which may not be so logical as that of the anti-Church party or of our alarmed friends, but is a solution, like all solutions of great questions in England, essentially practical, for the country has come to a conviction that the union between Church and State is perfectly consistent with the existence and complete development of the principle of religious liberty. All the points which were argued during the period of transition have been considered and solved by the country. The country has felt that if you terminate the connection between Church and State, it is not probable, for example, that in this age and nation an *imperium in imperio* would be tolerated by the State. They saw that it was most improbable that if the alliance were terminated the Church would be allowed to remain in possession of her property and privileges. They knew very well that the Government of the country, seeing the importance of the religious principle as one of the chief elements for the

government of mankind, would not allow it to run waste and wild in society. They knew what had happened in other countries where the alliance between Church and State had been terminated, or where Churches had been confiscated and plundered—namely, the process by which what is called ‘the ministers of all religions’ are salaried by the State; and there was a general feeling that if that did occur, there would be something besides religious truth that would be endangered, and that political liberty might be imperilled. Thus after years of discussion the public voice arrived at a practical conclusion on this main question.

Then there was another point. It had been held that it was impossible that the Church could long maintain itself in this country in consequence of the spread of Dissent. But, during this period of transition, we fell upon a statistical age. Statistics were studied by the nation, and they discovered that there had not been a spread of Dissent, that, on the contrary, Dissent had diminished—I speak of true religious Dissent—that the descendants of the Puritan families, whom I shall always mention with that respect which their high qualities and historical character deserve, had almost all merged into the Church itself; that the tendency of the age was no longer favourable to hostile rivalry among religious bodies, but rather led to virtual, though not formal, co-operation between churches and consistories; and that, in short, there was no reason for supposing that the Church on the ground of Dissent could not be maintained in its original and constitutional position. Well, then, there was another very important point which occupied public attention, and that was the contrast placed so prominently by the anti-Church party before the country, between the state of the Church and the millions of the population who had escaped its influence, though not in communion with any other religious body. Well, but the result of deliberating over that startling state of affairs was that the country came to a conclusion exactly the reverse of that which the opponents of the Church wished to instil into the public mind. They knew the religious character of the people of England; they argued that if there are millions not

in communion with the National Church because they have never had the opportunity, it is a duty to provide competent machinery to deal with this population, and instruct them in those great truths which they have hitherto neglected. The progress of the Church of late years in great towns justifies this conclusion. Therefore, it has happened that the country—in a manner which may not be logical, but which is essentially practical—has solved the whole question. And while the anti-Church party and a considerable and most respectable section of Churchmen were prepared to dissolve the alliance between Church and State, the period of the transition passed, because the nation had arrived at the resolution that the union between Church and State should be upheld.

I take this to be the result that they arrived at after many years' discussion, as is customary in England when great principles of policy are at stake, and that, I believe, is the secret reason and the real cause of the change which took place in Parliament three years ago upon the subject of Church rates. The matter of Church rates is one, in itself, no doubt of main importance; but when we consider that in the Parliament which had abolished them by a large majority there was in the course of a few years a majority in their favour, the change can only be accounted for by the fact that the country had fixed upon the question of Church rates to prove their determination to support the union between Church and State, and their conviction that, practically, the alliance was consistent with the full development of religious liberty. But the consequence of such a state of affairs is most significant. Thirty or forty years ago there was an alternative. It might have been open to the Church to abdicate its nationality, or to assert it, but there was never a middle course. The country has resolved that its nationality should not be abdicated, and the consequence is that the Church must assert its nationality.

I remember some three years ago, at a meeting of one of these diocesan societies which I attended—I am not sure whether it was not this identical society—I ventured to point out the measures by which I thought the nationality of the Church might be practically asserted; and though I will not

now enter into any details, I will notice them briefly, because they will complete the position from which I wish to draw some inferences that may affect our meeting this day. I said then I thought there were five modes by which the nationality of the Church might be asserted, it being now, as I say, not only the duty but the necessity of the Church that it should be asserted in a practical character. . And, in the first place, I said the nationality of the Church might be asserted with regard to the question of education. I hold that it is of the utmost importance that the Church should not in any way compromise the legitimate position she occupies now with reference to the education of the people, which the Church has obtained by natural circumstances, and which is sanctioned by law. Secondly, I said another practical mode of asserting its nationality was to support, not a wild and extravagant, but a temperate and matured plan for the extension of the episcopate. The third measure was that in all ecclesiastical matters which were not of a strictly spiritual nature, the assistance of the laity should be called into co-operation with the clergy; in order that we should erase from the public mind that vulgar but pernicious error that the Church is a merely clerical corporation. The fourth measure I then ventured to say should be pursued was to assert the rights and duties of Churchmen existing in our parochial constitution, and which are secured to them by law. And the fifth course I then impressed on the assembled diocese was to uphold these diocesan institutions, to support one of which we are this day assembled.

Now, in my opinion, these are measures temperate in conception, and practical in execution, which, if carried—and I believe they might be carried, for they are entirely adapted to the temper of the times—would add amazingly to the efficiency of the Church. As I am upon the subject, I will venture to say there are three other subjects or measures which I think ought now also to engage the attention of Churchmen. And the first is, that we should favour in every possible manner the formation of Convocation on a broader basis, and with a fuller representation of the parochial clergy. It is not necessary now, nor would it be convenient, to enter into details on the

subject. But I would just intimate that if the two provinces were united the basis would be much broader; and at this moment in the province of York the parochial clergy are more fully represented than in the province of Canterbury. There is something, I think, ridiculous in the diocese of London for example, with 1,000 clergy, being only represented in Convocation by two parochial clergymen.

The next measure we shall induce my right honourable friend (Mr. Cardwell) to undertake, and that is to place the relations of our Colonial Church—which, remember, is not an Established Church—with the metropolis in a more satisfactory condition than they are at present.

And the last measure, which in my own mind is paramount, is the reconstruction of the tribunal of last appeal in matters spiritual, which it appears to me the circumstances of these times imperatively demand. I know the difficulty, I know the delicacy of that question, but still I am apt to believe, after giving it that consideration which its importance deserves, that these difficulties may be overcome, and that the most delicate circumstances connected with it may be treated in a happy manner. I do believe that with entire deference to the principle of the royal supremacy, which I trust may never be lost sight of for an instant, it may be possible to reconcile the requirements of the State with the conscience of the Church. Now, allow me to repeat what on a previous occasion, some years ago, I had the honour of stating—that the object of these measures is to restore the Church to its natural—and I may say its original—efficiency, by means which I think are essentially practical, and which are in tone and harmony with the spirit of the age in which we live; and I could not but believe that, with cordial co-operation among Churchmen, those eight measures might be carried. My lord, they form a Church policy, temperate, practical, yet perfectly efficient. There is no argument that I can well collect that can be urged against them of a valid character; and yet it appears to me that if these eight objects were obtained, the Church in this country would occupy a position of just influence and salutary power which it has not for a long time filled.

Well, my lord, I had hoped that when I should have the honour of addressing you again on matters connected with these societies, I should have had to congratulate ourselves that that inconsistency, and timidity, and perplexity which have paralysed the efforts of Churchmen for so many years, had entirely disappeared. I did think that cordial co-operation might have been obtained from all classes of Churchmen after the significant manner in which the country has decided that no disunion between Church and State should take place, but that the old constitution was, in its opinion, consistent with the fulfilment of the principle of religious liberty. I thought we might then have forgotten all our differences, and that we in this hearty and united spirit might have laboured with perseverance, with temper, with no anxiety for precipitate success, but with the determination of men who clearly see a practical object before them, for the attainment of the measures which I have noticed to-day, and which, as I have stated, form in my mind a complete Church policy. But I am sorry to say I still find, at least in that part of the diocese with which I am particularly connected, difficulties existing, and, though they are different from those we have encountered before, paralysing to a great degree the efforts which would be made for the support of the diocesan societies, and especially that which has called us together to-day. My right honourable friend has touched on them with delicacy, but with clearness. We are now told that the Church is in a very difficult position, that its condition is not satisfactory; and these are made the arguments, and, no doubt, the conscientious grounds, for keeping aloof from associations like the present. But then I observe, in contrast with the difficulties which we had to encounter three or four years ago, that the nature of the difficulty is now very different. In old days, during the period of transition which I have sketched, the Church was accused of apathy, of having no hold on the feelings of the great mass of the population, of exercising little influence, and its fall was predicted in consequence. But the case is now changed. No one now accuses the Church of apathy, no one now accuses the Church of not possessing influence, of wanting intelligence; but it is still doomed. The

Church must still fall; it is still in as great danger as ever; and that danger comes not from an anti-Church party, but from its own intestine condition, and the parties that exist in its own bosom.

My lord, I am not here to deny, or to regret, the existence of parties in the Church. Parties in the Church have always existed. They existed in the Church at Jerusalem. They existed in the Church at Ephesus. They existed always in the Church at Rome. And it would be most wonderful, indeed, if in a country like England, where party has always been recognised as the most efficient and satisfactory means of conducting public affairs, party should not be found in the Church alone. My lord, what is party? Party is organised opinion, and so long as the nature of men is of that various and varying character which we all know it is, so long will there be various and varying modes by which it will express itself, or by which it may be counselled, upon religious matters. There are some who find solace in symbolic ceremonies, and who feel that the religious sentiment can only be adequately satisfied by ecclesiastical services in that vein. There are others with whom the soul requires to be sustained by the ecstasy of spiritual enthusiasm. But so long as they who counsel or pursue these modes meet on the common platform of true Church principles—and I hold that the acknowledgment of the Church as the sacred depository of divine truth is the truest Church principle—I do not think that such courses are to be regretted, but on the whole I have no doubt both schools of religious feeling have been beneficially and equally advantageous to the country and the Church. And doubtless the two great parties in the Church have effected as eminent service for true religion as the two great parties in the State have achieved for public liberty and the good government of the country.

But there is yet another party to which I must for a moment refer, because, no doubt, the influence of that party upon that cordial co-operation of Churchmen by which alone these societies can be effectually supported is advantageous. Now, that is a party described by an epithet which I observe a distinguished prelate of the Church has adopted in a recent

address to his clergy ; but which appears to me to be an epithet that I should not use within these walls, for it has hardly as yet entered into the category of classical expression. It is an epithet, my lord, that would imply a particular degree of comprehension. But while fully acknowledging the abilities, the eloquence, and the knowledge of this new Church party, I must say that there is a peculiarity about the comprehension which they attempt to accomplish. Hitherto there has been nothing new in a Church party aiming at the comprehensive ; but then they have always wished to include all those who believed anything ; whereas the remarkable peculiarity of the comprehension of the party to which I now refer is, that they seem to wish to include everybody who believes nothing. Now, there is no doubt that the influence of the new party is very injurious to the society whose interests have called us together to-day : and if we attempt to get rid of the difficulty by avoiding to speak about it, we in fact do not remedy our position, but the deleterious process from which we are suffering goes on without any effort on our part to oppose its evil consequences. The Church having, as I think, successfully encountered the unsatisfactory condition of mind among Churchmen which was the consequence, and the long consequence, of the change in the constitution ; having overcome that difficulty, and Churchmen having it in their power, by the measures to which I have referred, to place, by their cordial co-operation, the Church in its proper position in this country, I will make a few remarks upon the new difficulty with which we have to deal—for it would be unwise to treat the existence and influence of this new party with contempt—and consider whether the difficulties which no doubt exist are insuperable, whether we must yield to them, or whether we have a prospect of overcoming them.

Now, this new party is not founded upon the principle of authority, on which all Church parties hitherto in this country, and in all countries to some degree, have been founded. But it is founded upon a large singular principle. It is founded upon the principle of criticism. Now, doubt is an element of criticism, and the tendency of criticism is necessarily sceptical. I use the epithet in a philosophical, and not in a popular or

odious sense. It is quite possible, for example, that a party founded upon the principle of criticism may arrive at conclusions which we may deem monstrous. They may, for example, reject inspiration as a principle and miracles as a practice. That is possible. And I think it quite logical that, having arrived at such conclusions, they should repudiate creeds and reject articles of faith, because creeds and articles of faith cannot exist or be sustained without acknowledging the principle of inspiration and the practice of miracles. All that I admit; but what I do not understand, and what I wish to draw the attention of this assembly and of the country generally to, is this—that, having arrived at these conclusions, having arrived conscientiously at the result that, with their opinions, they must repudiate creeds and reject articles, they should not carry their principles to their legitimate end, but that repudiating creeds and rejecting articles, they are still sworn supporters of ecclesiastical establishments—fervent upholders of dignitaries of the Church—even of rectors, vicars, and curates. Now, this is a matter of most serious importance, not merely for us to consider as Churchmen, but for the country generally to consider, whatever may be its opinions or forms of faith—for the consequences may be very critical. If it be true, as I am often told it is, that the age of faith has passed, then the fact of having an opulent hierarchy, supported by men of high cultivation, brilliant talents and eloquence, and perhaps some ambition, with no distinctive opinions, might be a very harmless state of affairs, and it would certainly not be a very permanent one. But then, my lord, instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, when I observe what is passing around us—what is taking place in this country, and not only in this country, but in other countries, and even hemispheres—instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, I hold that the characteristic of the present age is a craving credulity. Why, my lord, man is a being born to believe. And if no Church comes forward with its title-deeds of truth, sustained by the tradition of sacred ages and by the conviction of countless generations to guide him, he will find altars and idols in his own heart and his own imagination. But observe this. What

must be the relations of a powerful Church, without distinctive creeds, with a being of such a nature? Why, of course the chief principle of political economy will be observed. Where there is a great demand there will be a proportionate supply; and commencing, as the new school may, by rejecting the principle of inspiration, it will end by every priest becoming a prophet; and beginning as they do by repudiating the practice of miracles, before long, rest assured, we shall be living in a fitting scene of spiritual phantasmagoria. There are no tenets, however extravagant, and no practices however objectionable, which will not in time develop under such a state of affairs; opinions the most absurd, and ceremonies the most revolting—

*Qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colat—*

perhaps to be followed by the incantations of Canidia and the Corybantian howl.

But consider the country in which all this may take place. Dangerous in all countries, it would be yet more dangerous in England. Our empire is now unrivalled for its extent; but the base—the material base—of that empire is by no means equal to the colossal superstructure. It is not our iron ships; it is not our celebrated regiments; it is not these things which have created, or, indeed, really maintain, our empire. It is the character of the people. Now, I want to know where that famous character of the English people will be if they are to be influenced and guided by a Church of immense talent, opulence, and power, without any distinctive creed. You have in this country accumulated wealth that never has been equalled, and probably it will still increase. You have a luxury that will some day peradventure rival even your wealth. And the union of such circumstances with a Church without a distinctive creed will lead, I believe, to a dissoluteness of manners and of morals rarely equalled in the history of man, but which prepares the tomb of empires.

There is another point in connection with this subject which I cannot help noticing on the present occasion. It is the common cry—the common blunder—that articles of faith and religious creeds are the arms of a clergy, and are framed to

tyrannise over a land. They are exactly the reverse. The precise creed and the strict article are the title-deeds of the laity to the religion which has descended to them. And whenever these questions have been brought before Parliament, I have always opposed alterations of articles and subscriptions on this broad principle—that the security and certainty which they furnish are the special privileges of the laity, and that you cannot tell in what position the laity may find themselves, if that security be withdrawn. Perhaps I ought to apologise for having touched upon this subject; but it appears to me—I know it from my own experience—to be one vitally connected with the affairs that have called us here to-day, because the opinions of the new school are paralysing the efforts of many who ought to be our friends. Let us venture to ask ourselves this question: Will these opinions succeed? Is there a possibility of their success? My conviction is that they will fail. I wish to do justice to the acknowledged talent, the influence, and information which the new party command; but I am of opinion they will fail, for two reasons. In the first place, having examined all their writings, I believe, without any exception, whether they consist of fascinating eloquence, diversified learning, and picturesque sensibility—I speak seriously what I feel—and that, too, exercised by one honoured in this university, and whom to know is to admire and regard; or whether you find them in the cruder conclusions of prelates who appear to have commenced their theological studies after they had grasped the crozier, and who introduce to society their obsolete discoveries with the startling wonder and frank ingenuousness of their own savages; or whether I read the lucubrations of nebulous professors, who seem in their style to have revived chaos; or, lastly, whether it be the provincial arrogance and the precipitate self-complacency which flash and flare in an essay or review, I find the common characteristic of their writings is this—that their learning is always secondhand.

I do not say that because learning is secondhand it may not be sound, or that knowledge because it is secondhand may not be true; but this I do say, without any fear of denial from any man competent to give an opinion upon the subject, that there

is something in original research, so invigorating to the intellect and which so braces and disciplines the human mind, that those who have undergone that process arrive at their conclusions with great caution and with great circumspection; but when a man of brilliant imagination has to deal with a vast quantity of facts furnished by the labours of others, he is often tempted to generalise with a fatal facility, and often arrives at conclusions which in time he has not only to repudiate, but which sometimes he is destined to refute.

In the second place, when I examine the writings of those who have been the masters of the new school in this learning; men who undoubtedly have gone through the process of original research, and have not found their equals for learning and perseverance and erudite assiduity for many generations—the great scholars of Germany—I find this in their labours, that there is really nothing new. I admit their distinguished qualities. As Hebraists they are equal to the great scholars of the eighteenth, and who flourished at the end of the seventeenth century. In their knowledge of the cognate Semitic dialects they are infinitely superior. In the new theory, or science of language, as it is justly called, they have of course an advantage over the old scholars, because it is a science that has only been developed in our own time. But this I do say, that in all important conclusions from the alleged materials of the Book of Genesis down to the formation of the canon, and in every important event, historical, literary, and spiritual, that occurred in that long interval, they have been anticipated by the great Hebrew scholars who flourished in the eighteenth and at the end of the seventeenth century.

I know it may be said that the suggestions of an Astruc and the investigations of a Father Simon were known only to those who, like them, lived in their cells and colleges; but this is a vulgar and delusive error. The learned labours of those men formed the mind and inspired the efforts of the two most intellectual bodies of men that have existed certainly since the Greek philosophers—for I think they were superior to the schoolmen—the free thinkers of England and the philosophers

of France. Therefore the conclusions of these eminent scholars were thoroughly placed before the public mind. All that inexorable logic, irresistible rhetoric, bewildering wit, could avail to popularise those views were set in motion to impress the new learning on the minds of the two leading nations of Europe—the people of England and the people of France. And they produced their effect. The greatest of revolutions was, I will not say occasioned by those opinions, but no one can deny that their promulgation largely contributed to that mighty movement popularly called the French Revolution, which has not yet ended, and which is certainly the greatest event that has happened in the history of man. Only the fall of the Roman Empire can be compared to it; but that was going on for centuries, and so gradually that it cannot for one moment be held to have so instantaneously influenced the opinion of the world. Now, what happened? Look at the age in which we live, and the time when these opinions were successfully promulgated by men who, I am sure, with no intention to disparage a new party, I may venture to say, were not unequal to them. Look at the Europe of the present day, and the Europe of a century ago. It is not the same Europe. Its very form is changed. Whole nations and great nations which then flourished have disappeared. There is not a political constitution in Europe existing at the present time which then existed. The leading community of the Continent of Europe has changed all its landmarks, altered its boundaries, erased its local names. The whole jurisprudence of Europe has been subverted. Even the tenure of land, which of all human institutions most affects the character of man, has been altered. The feudal system has been abolished. Not merely laws have been changed; not merely manners have been changed; but customs have been changed. And what has happened? When the turbulence was over; when the shout of triumph and the wail of agony were alike stilled; when, as it were, the waters had subsided, the sacred heights of Sinai and of Calvary were again revealed, and amid the wreck of thrones and tribunals, of extinct nations and abolished laws, mankind, tried by so many sorrows, purified

by so much suffering, and wise with such unprecedented experience, bowed again before the divine truths that Omnipotence in His ineffable wisdom had entrusted to the custody and the promulgation of a chosen people !

Well, then, because all their learning is secondhand ; because their conclusions are not new ; because they have already been placed before the mind of man with a power and a spirit that it is vain to expect will be again equalled ; because mankind have tried and rejected this new learning now bolstered up for our edification ; I believe that the efforts of this new school, powerful as they are and influential at this moment, and most injurious to these diocesan societies, will fail.

Before sitting down, there is only one other point on which I will venture briefly to touch. We are told every day that all I have feebly expressed to you may be true, but at the same time there is a characteristic of the present age which never existed in preceding ages, and which must be destructive to the Church and to all religious establishments, and that is the progress of science. The discoveries of science are not, we are told, consistent with the teachings of the Church. Now, I am sure there is not one in this theatre who is not prepared to do full justice to the merits of scientific men, and who does not fully appreciate those discoveries of science which have added so much to the convenience of life and to the comfort of man. But it is of great importance, when this tattle about science is mentioned, that we should annex to the phrase precise ideas. I hold that the function of science is the interpretation of nature, and the interpretation of the highest nature is the highest science. What is the highest nature ? Man is the highest nature. But I must say that when I compare the interpretation of the highest nature by the most advanced, the most fashionable and modish school of modern science with some other teachings with which we are familiar, I am not prepared to say that the lecture-room is more scientific than the Church. What is the question now placed before society with a glib assurance the most astounding ? The question is this : Is man an ape or an angel ? My lord, I am on the side of the

angels¹ I repudiate with indignation and abhorrence the contrary view, which is, I believe, foreign to the conscience of humanity. More than that even intellectual point of view, I believe the severest metaphysical analysis is opposed to such a conclusion. But, on the other hand, what does the Church teach us? What is its interpretation of this highest nature? It teaches us that man is made in the image of his Creator—a source of inspiration and solace—a source from which only can flow every right principle of morals and every divine truth. I say, therefore, that when we are told that the teachings of the Church are not consistent with the discoveries of science, and that in that sense the inferiority of the Church is shown, I totally deny the proposition. I say that the scientific teaching of the Church upon the most important of all subjects is, in fact, infinitely superior to anything that has been brought forward by any of those new discoveries. In fact, it is between those two contending interpretations of the nature of man and their consequences that society will have to decide. Their rivalry is at the bottom of all human affairs. Upon our acceptance of that divine interpretation, for which we are indebted to the Church, and of which the Church is the guardian, all sound and salutary legislation depends. That truth is the only security for civilisation, and the only guarantee of real progress.

Now, it is to promote, to foster, and to extend in this country—but mainly of course to-day in this diocese—the teaching of that Church that we are assembled here. Let us support in spirit the resolution which has been moved by my right honourable friend; let us act with united energy, with that cordial co-operation which, if Churchmen share, they will carry everything before them, and having successfully discarded all the attempts which for some time appeared to paralyse our efforts, and circulate distrust among us by those who are the avowed opponents of the Church, let us equally discard the fanciful ideas of this new party in the Church, which have extended only because

¹ It is perhaps hardly necessary to point out that all that was meant by this assertion is that the speaker was in favour of the theory which traced man's descent to the angels.

persons are always captivated by assumed novelty, but which, I think, I have shown have no genuine claim to that title. And let us, by our united efforts, support that Church policy to which I adverted at the commencement of my observations, and especially the action of these diocesan institutions.



PART VI.
MISCELLANEOUS.

LITERARY MIND.
BROMPTON HOSPITAL.
DEATH OF PRINCE ALBERT.



THE VALUE OF LITERATURE TO MEN OF BUSINESS.
ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
MANCHESTER ATHENÆUM, October 23, 1844.

[This visit to Manchester was during Mr. Disraeli's tour through the manufacturing districts, in company with Lord John Manners and Mr. B. Cochrane—the results of which he reproduced in 'Sybil.']

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—When I last had the honour of addressing the members of the Manchester Athenæum, they were struggling for the existence of their institution. It was a critical moment in their fortunes. They had incurred a considerable debt in its establishment: the number of its members had gradually, and even for some years, considerably decreased; and in appealing to the sympathies of the community they were, unfortunately, appealing to those who were themselves but slowly recovering from a period of severe and lengthened suffering. A year has elapsed, and the efforts that you thus made to extricate yourselves from these difficulties may now be fairly examined. That considerable debt has been liquidated: the number of your members has been trebled—I believe quadrupled; and I am happy to say that your fortunes have rallied, while that suffering and surrounding community once more meet together in prosperity and success. I think it not inopportune at this moment of security and serene fortune, that we should clearly understand the object for which this great struggle has been made. Under circumstances which, if not desperate, filled you with the darkest gloom, you resolved like men to exert your utmost energies: you applied yourselves to those difficulties with manly energy—with manly discretion. Not too confident in yourselves, you appealed, and appealed

successfully, to the softer sex, who you thought would sympathise with an institution intended to humanise and refine. *Dux fœmina facti* might, indeed, be the motto of your institution, for it was mainly by such influence that you obtained the result which we now celebrate.

But if the object which you had at stake was of so great importance, if it justified exertions so remarkable, made too at a moment when energy was doubly valuable, because you were dispirited, it, I think, would not be unwise for us now to inquire what was the object for which we then exerted ourselves, whether it were one which justified that great sacrifice, and if it were, to ascertain why it was ever imperilled. To-night we are honoured by many who, like myself, are strangers except in feeling, to your community. We are honoured, too, by the presence of deputies from many societies in this county and the North of England, who acknowledge a sympathy and an analogy of purpose with the Athenæum of Manchester. It will be well then to place before them briefly for their instruction, and perhaps it may not be without profit to remind you, what that institution was that you have struggled to uphold, but the existence of which was once endangered.

I think it is seven or eight years ago that some of the leading members of your community, remembering perhaps that there was a time when they regretted that for them such advantages did not exist, thought they would establish in this great city some institution that might offer to the youth of Manchester relaxation which might elevate, and a distraction which would save them from a senseless dissipation. They thought that the time had arrived when a duty devolved on those who took a leading part in communities, that they should sympathise with the wants of the rising race, and therefore they resolved to establish an institution where those advantages that I have referred to might be supplied. With these views they resolved, in the first instance, that some place should be supplied where the youth of Manchester might become perfectly acquainted with the passing mind, and passions, and feelings, and intelligence of the age. They rightly understood that the newspaper was the most effective arm of the press. It may, indeed, be

considered as the infantry of the press. It is not a complete battalion—you require also ordnance and artillery, a brilliant cavalry: above all, you require the staff of the commander-in-chief, that without absolutely or actively interfering in the fray surveys all that occurs, and is ready at all times to apply itself to the quarter which requires counsel; but still you may consider the journal as the most efficient arm of the press. With these views they furnished a chamber in which the members of the Athenæum might perfectly be acquainted, in the perusal of the chief journals of the empire, with all that was passing in the country, all that was agitating and interesting the public mind—which might supply them with that information, and guide them in forming those opinions which it is the duty of every citizen of a free community to be acquainted with and to entertain. But, conscious that, however qualified the journal is to stimulate curiosity, to assist investigation, to guide opinion, the knowledge of that individual that is limited only by the daily press is in danger of becoming superficial, you thought that the members of the institution should have some means of consulting the more mature opinions, the more accurate researches, of the literary mind of this and other countries, and wisely you made the chamber in which they might read the newspaper an anteroom only to the library. You formed a collection which is now not contemptible in numbers, for you may count it by thousands. What, however, is not so great as many of you must desire—which, in passing, I may be permitted to say, is no disgrace to it, because it is a deficiency which is shared by every great collection in this country, and I believe in Europe, but which I should be glad and you would be proud to be supplied in Manchester—I mean, is that department which may be described as a commercial library. Manchester that was once merely an assemblage of manufacturers, is now a great mercantile emporium, and at slight expense and with no great difficulty, if there were sufficient zeal, you might make a collection of all those interesting and isolated tracts on commerce which at various times during the last century have appeared in England, which now with difficulty you can refer to, but which would form in a collection a peculiar and interesting body

of commercial literature and which, by the by, you cannot find in the national repository of this country.

You who had thus furnished the members of this institution with the journals which gave them the information and feeling of the hour, the library where they might correct the hasty opinions which perhaps that passing criticism is apt to engender—you knew there were many not deficient in ability, not deficient in aptness or feeling, to whom the very ceremony of reading is irksome, and who require to be appealed to by another means, perhaps at first sight more captivating. Therefore you formed a theatre where lectures were given, where the experiments of philosophy, the investigations of literature and the profusions of art, were rendered agreeable to the audience by the charms of the human voice. You were not content with having raised an institution where the journal, the library and the lecture-room were always prepared to enlighten or to amuse—you remembered those wise words of Charles V., who said that 'The man who knew two languages had two souls and two lives,' and therefore you established classes by which the youth of this city might initiate themselves in a knowledge of the modern languages. Your plan was comprehensive: but it was not limited even by this fourth division. You knew well that in a free country, in a country that prides itself upon the science and practice of self-government, it is the duty—at least it is the interest—of all men to be able to express themselves with perspicuity, and if possible with elegance: therefore you established a discussion society, an institution in harmony with the political life and the social manners of England.

Having thus amply provided for the formation of the mind of your new and rising community, you still remembered (borrowing a happy idea from those races of antiquity to whom you owe your name) that any education which confined itself to sedentary pursuits was essentially imperfect, that the body as well as the mind should be cultivated—you wisely, and in no common and ordinary spirit, established a gymnasium; these are the principal characteristics of your institution. There are others on which it would be wearisome to dwell: but I have

placed before you six principal objects that you had desired to attain. Having taken this large and comprehensive view of the wants of your society, and meeting them with a spirit so liberal and large, you took the best and wisest step. You knew well the effect that architecture produces on the human mind; you determined therefore that your establishment should be embodied in an edifice that should please the imagination and satisfy the taste. You invited the most eminent of modern architects; under the roof of a noble elevation you supplied the means for pursuing those studies that I have indicated: and this is a simple account of the Manchester Athenæum.

It is difficult to conceive how a nobler purpose, if for a moment we dilate upon it, could have animated your intentions. When we remember the class of your community for which this institution was particularly adapted—when we conceive—difficult as it is, surrounded as we now are with luxury and pleasure—when we attempt to picture to our imagination what is the position of a youth, perhaps of very tender years, sent, as I am informed is very frequently the case, from a distant district—to form his fortune in this great metropolis of labour and of science—when we think of that youth, tender in age, with no domestic hearth to soothe and stimulate, to counsel or control—when we picture him to ourselves after a day of indefatigable toil, left to his lonely evenings and his meagre lodgings, without a friend and without a counsellor—flying to dissipation from sheer want of distraction, and perhaps involved in vice before he is conscious of the fatal net that is surrounding him—what a contrast to his position does it offer when we picture him to ourselves with a feeling of self-confidence, which supports and sustains him after his day of toil, entering a great establishment where everything that can satisfy curiosity, that can form taste, that can elevate the soul of man and lead to noble thoughts and honourable intentions, surrounds him! When we think of the convenience and the comfort, the kindness and the sympathy, which, with a due decorum of manners he is sure to command—this youth, who but a few hours before was a stranger—viewing an institution

like the present only in this limited aspect, one must regard it as a great harbour of intellectual refuge and social propriety.

If my description of what this institution offers to us, if my view of what it in some degree supplies, be just, what, I must inquire, is the reason that an institution, the prosperity of which now cannot be doubted, but so brief a time ago could apparently have been in the last stage of its fortunes? It is not an agreeable task—I fear it may be considered by some an invidious one—if I, who am a stranger among you, should attempt to play the critic upon your conduct: but I feel confidence in your indulgence. I remember the kindness which has placed me in this honourable position, and therefore I shall venture to express to you the two reasons to which I think the dangerous state of your position must fairly be ascribed. I would say, in the first place, without imputing the slightest fault to the originators of this institution—wishing to be most distinctly understood as not only not imputing any fault to them, but most decidedly being of opinion that the fault does not lie at their door, still I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that in the origin of this institution, by circumstances not foreseen, and which certainly were not intended, a party, a limited, and a sectarian feeling, in some degree pervaded its management. I confess, myself, that it appears to me that it would have been a marvel if it had been otherwise. When we remember the great changes that had then but very recently occurred in this country; when we recall to our mind not only the great changes that had occurred, but the still greater that were menaced and discussed; when we remember what an influence is created where local jealousy blends with political passion, it is not difficult to imagine, because there are none of us present but in their sphere must have felt its influence—it is not wonderful that men of different political opinions should look with extreme jealousy upon each other. A combination of peculiar circumstances that created a balanced state of parties in those places where the struggle for dominion and power takes place, very much assisted this feeling: and that such a feeling existed throughout all England in a degree more intense and more virulent than has ever been equalled in the

history of this country, I think no man will deny and all must deplore. For my own part, I really believe that, had that party and sectarian feeling proceeded in the same ratio of virulence it has done for the last twelve or fourteen years, it must have exercised a barbarising influence upon public sentiments and public manners. There are some amongst us now, I know, who believe that the period has arrived when a great effort must be made to emancipate this country from the degrading thralldom of faction—to terminate, if possible, that extreme, that sectarian and limited view in which all human conduct is examined, observed, and criticised—to put an end to that exclusiveness, which, in its peculiar sphere, is equally deleterious as that aristocratical exclusiveness of manners which has produced so much evil; and, as far as I can form an opinion, these views have met with sympathy from every part of the country. I look upon it that to-night—I hope I am not mistaken—we are met to consummate and to celebrate the emancipation of this city, at least as far as the Athenæum extends, from the influence of these feelings. I hope that our minds and our hearts are alike open to the true character of this institution, to the necessities which have created it, to the benefits to which it leads: and happy I shall be, and all, I am sure, who are assisting me this evening, if it prove that our efforts, however humble, may have assisted in so delightful and so desirable a consummation.

Now, that is one of the reasons, and one of the principal reasons, why I believe a blight seemed to have fallen over our fortunes. I think at the same time that there is another cause that had exercised an injurious effect upon the position, until recently, of this institution. I think that a limited view of its real character has been taken even by those who were inclined to view it in a spirit of extreme friendliness. It has been looked upon in the light of a luxury and not of a necessity; as a means of enjoyment in the hour of prosperity from which we ought to be debarred when the adverse moment has arrived: so that, when trade was prospering, when all was sunshine, a man might condescend to occupy his spare hours in something else than a melancholy brooding over the state of the country—that

when returns were rapid and profit ready, one might deign to cultivate one's faculties and become acquainted with what the mind of Europe was conceiving or executing; but these were delights to be reserved only for those chosen hours. Now, that, I am bound frankly to say, is not the view which I take of this question—not the idea which I have formed of the real character of the Manchester Athenæum, I look upon it as part of that great educational movement which is the noble and ennobling characteristic of the age in which we live. Viewing it in that light, I cannot content myself that it should be supported by fits and starts. The impulse which has given us this movement in modern times is one that may be traced to an age that may now be considered comparatively remote, though the swell of the waters has but recently approached our own shores. Heretofore society was established necessarily on a very different principle to that which is now its basis. As civilisation has gradually progressed, it has equalised the physical qualities of man. Instead of the strong arm it is now the strong hand that is the moving principle of society. You have disenthroned Force and placed on her high seat Intelligence; and the necessary consequence of this great revolution is that it has become the duty and the delight equally of every man to cultivate his faculties. The prince of all philosophy has told you in an immortal apophthegm, so familiar to you all that it is now written in your halls and chambers, 'Knowledge is power.' If that memorable passage had been pursued by the student who first announced the discovery of that great man to society, he would have found an oracle not less striking, and in my mind certainly not less true, for Lord Bacon has not only said that 'Knowledge is power,' but, living one century after the discovery of the printing press, he has also announced to the world that 'Knowledge is pleasure.'

Why, when the great body of mankind had become familiar with this great discovery, when they learned that a new source was opened to them of influence and enjoyment, is it wonderful that from that hour the heart of nations has palpitated with the desire of becoming acquainted with all that has happened, and with speculating on what may occur? It has indeed produced

upon the popular intellect an influence almost as great as—I might say analogous to—the great change which was produced upon the old commercial world by the discovery of the Americas. A new standard of value was introduced, and after this, to be distinguished man must be intellectual. Nor indeed am I surprised that this feeling has so powerfully influenced our race; for the idea that human happiness is dependent on the cultivation of the mind and on the discovery of truth, is, next to the conviction of our immortality, the idea the most full of consolation to man; for the cultivation of the mind has no limits, and truth is the only thing that is eternal. Indeed, when you consider what a man is who knows only what is passing under his own eyes, and what the condition of the same man must be who belongs to an institution like the one which has assembled us together to-night, is it—ought it to be—a matter of surprise that from that moment to the present you have had a general feeling throughout the civilised world in favour of the diffusion of knowledge? A man who knows nothing but the history of the passing hour, who knows nothing of the history of the past but that a certain person whose brain was as vacant as his own occupied the same house as himself, who in a moment of despondency or of gloom has no hope in the morrow, because he has read nothing that has taught him that the morrow has any changes—that man, compared with him who has read the most ordinary abridgment of history or the most common philosophical speculation, is as distinct and different an animal as if he had fallen from some other planet, was influenced by a different organisation, working for a different end, and hoping for a different result. It is knowledge that influences and equalises the social condition of man; that gives to all, however different their political position, passions which are in common, and enjoyments which are universal. Knowledge is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch's dream. Its base rests on the primæval earth, its crest is lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean; while the great authors who for traditionary ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, and maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven.

This feeling is so universal, that there is no combination of society in any age in which it has not developed itself. It may indeed be partly restrained under despotic governments, under peculiar systems of retarded civilisation, but it is a consequence as incidental to the spirit and the genius of the Christian civilisation of Europe as that the day should follow night, and the stars should shine according to their laws and order. Why the very name of the institution that brings us together illustrates the fact. I can recall, and I think I see more than one gentleman round me who equally can recall, the hours in which we wandered amid—

‘Fields that cool Ulysses loves’

At least, there is my honourable friend, the member for Stockport¹ who, I am sure, has a lively recollection of that classic stream, for I remember one of the most effective allusions he made to it in one of the most admirable speeches I ever listened to. But, notwithstanding that allusion, I would still appeal to the poetry of his constitution, and I know it abounds in that quality; I am sure that he could not have looked without emotion on that immortal scene. I still can remember that olive-crowned plain, that sunset crag, that citadel fame of ineffable beauty! That was a brilliant civilisation developed by a gifted race more than 2,000 years ago: at a time when the ancestors of the manufacturers of Manchester, who now clothe the world, were themselves covered with skins and tattoos like the red men of the wilderness.

But influences more powerful even than the useful lapse of time separate and distinguish you from that race. They were the children of the sun—you live in a distant, rugged, and northern clime; they bowed before different altars, they followed different customs, they were modified by different manners. Votaries of the Beautiful, they sought in art the means of embodying their passionate conceptions: you have devoted your energies to utility; and by the means of a power almost unknown to antiquity, by its miraculous agencies you have applied its creative force to almost every combination of human circumstances that could produce your objects. Yet, amid the

¹ Mr. Cobden

toil and triumphs of your scientific industry, upon you there comes the indefinable, the irresistible yearning for intellectual refinement; you build an edifice consecrated to those beautiful emotions and to those civilising studies in which they excelled, and you impress upon its front a name taken from—

‘Where on ’Ægean shores a city rose,
Built nobly; clear the air and light the soil;
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence.’

Beautiful triumph of immortal genius. Sublime incentive to eternal fame! Then, when the feeling is so universal, when it is one which modern civilisation is maturing and developing, who does not feel that it is not only the most benevolent, but the most politic thing you can do to avail yourself of its influence, and to direct in every way the formation of that character upon which intellect must necessarily now exercise an irresistible influence? We cannot shut our eyes any longer to the immense revolution; knowledge is no longer a lonely hermit affording a chance and captivating hospitality to some wandering pilgrim: knowledge is now found in the market-place, a citizen and leader of citizens. The spirit has touched the multitude: it has impregnated the mass—

*Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.*

I would yet say one word to those for whom this institution is not entirely but principally formed. I would address myself to that youth on whom the hopes of all societies repose and depend. I doubt not that they feel conscious of the position which they occupy—a position which, under all circumstances, at all periods, in every clime and country, is one replete with duty. The Youth of a nation are the Masters of Posterity; but the youth I address have duties peculiar to the position which they occupy. They are the rising generation of a society unprecedented in the history of the world; that is at once powerful and new. In other parts of the kingdom the remains of an ancient civilisation are prepared ever to guide, to cultivate, to inform, to influence the rising mind. But they are born in a miraculous creation of novel powers, and it is rather a provi-

dential instinct that has developed the necessary means of maintaining the order of your new civilisation than the natural foresight of man. This is their inheritance. They will be called upon to perform duties—great duties, I for one wish, for their sakes and for the sake of my country, that they may be performed greatly. I give to them that counsel that I have ever given to youth, and which I believe to be the wisest and the best—I tell them to aspire. I believe that the man who does not look up will look down, and that the spirit that does not dare to soar is destined perhaps to grovel. Every individual is entitled to aspire to that position which he believes his faculties qualify him to occupy, I know there are some who look with what I believe is short-sighted timidity and false prudence upon such views. They are apt to tell us, ‘Beware of filling the youthful mind with an impetuous tumult of turbulent fancies, teach youth rather to be content with his position, do not induce him to fancy that he is that which he is not, or to aspire to that which he cannot achieve.’ In my mind these are superficial delusions. He who enters the world finds his level. It is the solitary being, the isolated individual alone in his solitude, who may be apt to miscalculate his powers and misunderstand his character. But action teaches him the truth even if it be a stern one, association affords him the best criticism in the world, and I will venture to say that if he belongs to the Athenæum, though when he enters it he may think himself a genius, if nature has not given him a passionate and creative soul, before a week has elapsed he will become a very sober minded individual.

I wish to damp no youthful ardour. I can conceive what such an institution would have afforded to the suggestive mind of a youthful Arkwright. I can conceive what a nursing mother such an institution must have been to the brooding genius of your illustrious and venerated Dalton. It is the asylum of the self-formed, it is the counsellor of those who want counsel, but it is not a guide that will mislead, and it is the last place that will fill the mind of man with false ideas and false conceptions. He reads a newspaper, and his content oozes out after reading a leading article. He refers to the

library, and the calm wisdom of centuries and sages moderates the rash impulse of juvenescence. He finds new truths in the lecture-room and he goes home with a conviction that he is not so learned as he imagined. In the discussion of a great question with his equals in station perhaps he finds that he has met his superiors in intellect. These are the means by which the mind of man is brought to a healthy state, by which that self-knowledge that has always been lauded by sages may be most securely attained; it is a rule of universal virtue, and from the senate to the counting-house will be found of universal application. Then to the youth of Manchester, representing now the civic youth of this great country and this great district, I now appeal. Let it never be said again that the fortunes of these institutions were in danger. Let them take advantage of this hour of prosperity calmly to examine, and deeply to comprehend, the character of that institution in which these vast interests are involved, and which for them may afford a relaxation which brings no pang, and yields information which may bear them to fortune. It is to them I appeal with confidence, because I feel I am pleading their cause—with confidence, because in them I repose my hopes. When nations fall it is because a degenerate race intervenes between the class that is created and the class that is doomed. Let them then remember what has been done for them; the leaders of their community have not been remiss in regard to their interests. Let them remember that when the inheritance devolves upon them, they are not only to enjoy but to improve. They will one day succeed to the high places of this great community: let them recollect those who lighted the way for them; and when they have wealth, when they have authority, when they have power, let it not be said that they were deficient in public virtue and public spirit. When the torch is delivered to them let them also light the path of human progress to educated man.

ROYAL LITERARY FUND May 8 1872

[The King of the Belgians honoured the Literary Fund dinner on this occasion by taking the chair and his health was proposed by Mr Disraeli, the only speaker of the evening so at least report says who addressed His Majesty as 'Sire']

MR DISRAELI, who on rising was received with loud cheer, said, Sire, forty years ago a portion of Europe, and one not the least fair, seemed doomed by an inexorable fate to permanent dependence and periodical devastation. And yet the conditions of that country were favourable to civilisation and human happiness—a fertile soil skilfully cultivated, a land covered with beautiful cities and occupied by a race prone alike to liberty and religion, and always excelling in the fine art. In the midst of a European convulsion, a great statesman resolved to terminate that deplorable destiny, and conceived the idea of establishing the independence of Belgium on the principle of political neutrality. That idea was welcomed at first with sceptical contempt. But we who live in the after generation can bear witness to the triumphant success of that principle, and can now take the opportunity of congratulating that noble policy which consecrated to perpetual peace the battle-field of Europe.

Such a fortunate result was, no doubt, owing in a great degree to the qualities of the race which inhabited the land. They have shown on more than one occasion, under severe trials, that they have possessed those two qualities which can alone enable a nation to maintain the principle of neutrality—like energy and discretion. But we must not forget that it was their fortunate lot that the first monarch who ascended their throne was the most eminent statesman of the nineteenth century. With consummate prudence, with unerring judg-

ment, with vast and varied experience, he combined those qualities which at the same time win and retain the heart of communities. We can, especially at this moment remember with pride that he was virtually an English Prince—not merely because he was doubly allied to our Royal race, but because he had been educated—and with his observant mind such an opportunity was invaluable—he had been educated for years in this country in the practice of constitutional freedom. And when he ascended the throne he proved at once that he was determined to be, not the chief of a party, but the monarch of a nation.

When he left us, Europe was disheartened. The times were troublous and menacing, and all felt how much depended upon the character of his successor. In the presence of that successor it does not become me—it would be in every sense presumptuous—to offer a panegyric. But I may be permitted to speak of a public career in the language of critical appreciation; and I think that all will agree that the King of the Belgians, from the first moment at which he entered into public life, proved that he was sensible of the spirit of the age in which he lived, that he felt that authority to be revered must be enlightened, and that the seat of no sovereign was so secure as that of him who had confidence in his subjects. The King of the Belgians, our sovereign chairman, derived from his royal father another heritage besides the fair province of Flanders; he inherited an affection for the people of England. He has proved that in many instances and on many occasions, but never, in my mind, with more happy boldness than when he crossed the Channel, and determined to accept our invitation and become the chairman of the Royal Literary Fund. With what felicity he has fulfilled his duties this evening you are all witnesses. I have been connected with your society for many years, as those who preceded me with my name also were long before; and I think I can venture to say that in your annals none of those who have sat in that chair have performed its duties in a manner more admirable. It is something delightful, though at first sight inconsistent, that the Republic of Letters should, as it were, be presided over to-day by a

monarch; but if there be a charming inconsistency in such a circumstance, let us meet it with one as amiably flagrant and give to our sovereign chairman to-night a right royal welcome. It is with these feelings, gentlemen, that I now propose to you,—
‘The Health of His Majesty the King.’

SPEECH DELIVERED BY B. D'ISRAELI, ESQ., M.P.,
AT THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTION, BROMPTON. May
2nd, 1849.

GENTLEMEN,—Before I venture to propose the toast which I am about to do, I shall make a few observations on the various and varying circumstances that have achieved the result which has just been communicated to you by the Honorary Secretary, in his able and satisfactory Report. It is impossible to make a triter remark than to say that England has always been justly celebrated for its public charities, but, like all very trite remarks, it is also very just. I apprehend that it is a consequence of that happy habit of self-government that in this country has been enjoyed for a longer time, and generally speaking to a greater degree, than in any other country. That habit has imposed on us duties, the fulfilment of which, under other circumstances, might have devolved upon other powers; but in England they have necessarily fallen upon popular combination and voluntary subscription.

I took the occasion just now casually, with reference to another toast, to refer to two great public charities which have been founded in this country by the State. The State, therefore, has not altogether been neglectful of those great purposes that appeal to the sympathies of universal man. Greenwich and Chelsea are monuments which need never fear competition with the institutions of any country in the world. But generally speaking, the hospitals, the infirmaries, the asylums that abound in this metropolis, and in every part of this Island, are the results of this popular combination to which I have alluded.

The great hospitals, for instance, in this city—in the vicinity of which we are at this moment dining—need not for medical science or surgical skill, shrink from rivalry with any institutions that now flourish, or that at any time have existed in this or any other country. And it is very remarkable, but it is a fact which none can dispute, that, independently of those great endowments, magnificent in their scheme and munificent in their foundations—there are besides crowds of minor institutions which are devoted in detail to the cure and observation and study of disease, which those greater institutions are prepared to deal with in a more comprehensive spirit. Indeed, you may say that, from the eye to the heel, there is scarcely a disorder that can visit our flesh which has not had, and for a considerable period, in this country some institution devoted to its study, its cure, or its alleviation.

It is a very remarkable circumstance that until recently—I may say, most recently—there was only one disease in this country which no one attempted to study, which no one aspired to cure, and which no one came forward to alleviate. I need not remind you that it was a disease most prevalent in this country, if not peculiar to it, and one most general in its influence—one, too, not only general in its influence, but most heartrending in its results—one which, I may say, of all diseases most resembles death, for it knows no distinction of class or condition, but knocks at the turreted palaces of kings equally with the cellars and garrets of the poor. But it is a curious question, which if one had time one might enter into—how it happened that in a country so alive to the calamities of its creatures, where fever in every form and every type has been made not only the subject of study, but the foundation of institutions for its cure—one might be induced to stop to inquire how it was that a malady which, from the returns of our mortality, unfortunately figures as the greatest contributor to that dark record, should in a land so distinguished for its sympathy with suffering, for its scientific acquisitions, for the facility—the generous facility—with which wealth is devoted to the cure of the calamities of life, should, as it were in despair, be considered as the only visitation of Providence with which we were

not called upon to contend, and to whose inevitable influence we were to bow without a struggle?

One would have naturally supposed that, as private experience taught us, it was possible occasionally to arrest the course of consumption, frequently to mitigate the sufferings which it occasioned, and that as under any circumstances it was wise, by some machinery to aggregate its phenomena—from which alone men of science can deduce remedial results—that that spirit of association which has always pervaded English society, as well as that charitable impulse which has always been its characteristic, would have long ago brought about some result similar to that happy effect which we are now met to-night to celebrate and to aid. One would have imagined, when we remember that there is no class of society that is not perpetually reminded of the existence and influence of this dire complaint, which rocks, as it were, at the same time the cradle of the infant, and precipitates even age to the tomb, which touches all classes of society, which every one present in the course of his life has had to deplore as a fatal agency that has dusked the bloom of his existence, and darkened the retrospect of his life, one would have supposed the active impulses of Englishmen would long ago have induced them to see whether they could not grapple with this cause of calamity.

But that is not the case. Although this country is distinguished for its public charities, although, as I have said, the hospital, the infirmary, and the refuge cluster in every part of this Island, it was scarcely known but a few years back—it is not known now to the majority of our fellow-subjects, that the consumptive patient, the member of a class that suffers longest, and suffers in the greatest numbers, was exactly that patient against whom the doors of every charity were shut. It is not for me—it is not the wish of anyone here—to question the propriety of the regulations. They were made by men influenced by feelings as high and as good as any of those present. It was necessity that urged these regulations and dictated these rules. But as far as public charity is concerned, they were strict and inflexible; they were the laws of the Medes and Persians to those whose hectic cheek and faltering

energies were refused admittance into their munificent endowments. Because this disease was always lingering, because it was usually fatal—these were the reasons that for years were alleged why the victims of consumption should be welcomed only with closed doors. Now, appealing to your sympathies—after all the freshest and most perennial source of those actions which remedy the evils of life—one would have thought that these were circumstances which must from the first have engaged the feelings of man; but viewing it not merely in the light of sympathy, viewing it in the severer but not less loftier aspect of science, such a result ought to be greatly deprecated.

It has been considered that consumption is an incurable disease. It is not for me—it would be the height of arrogance in me, and in most of us present—to express an opinion upon such a subject; but the philosophy of human nature is our common portion. All of us must feel that the secrets of nature cannot yet be told; and in an age distinguished as the present for the application of science to social life—living as we do amid marvels so vast, daily produced by an agency so recent—he is indeed a bold man who can say that he is to fold his arms in despair and sit down, and when he encounters a calamity can believe that a beneficent Providence which surrounds us has not supplied man with some remedial resource.

Not only, then, because the natural sympathies of our kind should make us advance to arrest the disease that was always lingering, and often fatal, but because we must have felt that, in the establishment of an institution that would necessarily aggregate the phenomena from which scientific results accrue, it was the duty and interest of us all to establish some institution of that kind which would produce such results. I am surprised that earlier than it occurred so happy a conception should not have been afforded as that which established the Hospital for Consumption and Pulmonary Complaints. And yet it is easy for me at this moment, in our hour of success and prosperity, to express this feeling; but less than eight years ago such a principle was not recognised, such an idea had not found favour with society, and such an institution did not exist.

It is only eight years ago—less than eight years ago—that a public meeting not very numerously attended was held at the Hanover Square Rooms, and that those opinions which I have feebly expressed were first developed to public notice. It is less than eight years ago, but what an encouragement is it to a man animated by the consciousness of being the advocate of a principle—what an inducement is it to public exertion to those who are inspired by the consciousness of being the advocate of a principle,—what an inducement is it to public exertion to those who are inspired by the consciousness that they are performing a public duty, and working for the advancement of universal man, when we contrast that then almost unnoticed meeting with the consequences that have accrued from it, and even with this assemblage this day! Then the sufferer could not find a refuge; then it was held as an axiom that the sufferer could not even be relieved. But what during this brief period of time—a time hardly exceeding the term of the shortest lease of a house that any man in this room would grant to-morrow,—what have been the consequences of a grand idea launched into public life and intrusted to public spirit! Among those who came forward on that occasion, I think my noble friend on my right has the proud satisfaction of reflecting that he was present. They were then emboldened to hire a temporary apartment in a suburb, for the prudential prosecution of their plan. Twenty sufferers were admitted, at great cost and at a considerable venture.

But though eight years have only elapsed, I can now tell you that the old lodgings in the suburb have been superseded by a splendid and magnificent structure,—that during that term nearly 1,000 patients have received within those walls every remedy which skill and solicitude combined could desire,—that more than two-thirds of them have left those walls greatly, and in many instances completely relieved,—that though 200 have indeed quitted us for ever, they have quitted us under circumstances the most alleviating to them, with the consciousness that they have received every aid that the finest skill could devise, with the reflection that they have received every consolation which spiritual ministrations could afford, with the

conviction that their families, instead of sacrificing their all to obtain for them some casual and comparative luxury, have not been ruined by what to them must ever be a great calamity—the loss of those they love,—and with this great social consideration, that in the study of their cases they may have left a great scientific legacy that may spare to their posterity the evils from which they have suffered.

But I could not but listen with great interest to the conclusion of the Report which we have just heard read—namely, an abstract of the Medical Report, where I find in a document signed by a number of gentlemen of the highest character in their professions, that from what they observe, to a degree amounting to eight per cent., we have a right to believe that there have been positive cures through the agency of this institution; and though they have not been able to trace the result of all these instances to the end, from having lost sight of the patients after they quitted the hospital, yet, allowing even for the chances of relapse, we may rely that at least 23 per cent. of the patients have a chance of fulfilling the term of their lives without being cut short by this mysterious, baneful, and irresistible destroyer.

But it is not all that a thousand sufferers have been received within your walls, have been in a great degree relieved from their sufferings and restored to society,—it is not all that under any circumstances their disease, instead of being the mere suffering of the individual, has, in the worst circumstances, been recorded in the annals of science for the advantage of those who follow us. This is not all, but upwards of 11,000 patients have been ministered to by your energies, and by the devotion of your means upwards of 11,000 persons have been relieved without the walls of your institution.

It appears by the Report of the Medical Attendants, that they do not consider that they have themselves examined or scientifically analysed under these circumstances much more than 4,000 who suffered under pulmonary consumption. Many who came to them were examined simply because they thought they were afflicted with this disease. Bronchitis, morbid digestion, severe influenza—diseases as remarkable for

their depressing effects upon the mind as their physical qualities—drove them for a remedy to this Society. But when to more than 5,000 of our fellow creatures we could teach that they were not the victims of that fatal disease, before which they thought they were about to fall, can you for an instant deny that you were at that moment accomplishing as great a benefit to human nature almost as if you had cured them of the disorder of which they thought they were the victims? They went home from Brompton where, under the auspices of your institution, their wants and necessities had been administered to,—they went home that day with hearts relieved and spirits elevated; and when science whispered to them that they were not—that they could not be—admitted into your institution, because they were not qualified, first by a disease almost uniformly fatal, do not you suppose you renovated the energies of many subjects of the Queen, and that by that agency alone—which is apparently but a secondary consideration in the subject before us—you were advancing the fortunes of our common country?

Well, gentlemen, I say it is a very great encouragement that we should contrast the meeting in the Hanover Square Rooms with the results which have since occurred. I envy those who were present on that day. I envy the feeling of the gentleman who was Secretary at the Hanover Square Rooms, who read that day the number of letters from eminent individuals who could not attend. I envy him when I remember what he must feel at this moment when, in the eighth year, he reads the Report which he has communicated to us this night. I confess to you that I share in his feelings in no ordinary degree. I recollect with pride that that gentleman is one of my constituents. I recollect with interest that I have known him from his boyhood; and that in his boyhood I observed that high principle and great energy which have made his subsequent career eminently prosperous. And I am pleased, I am more than pleased—I am deeply gratified that, in that chapter of circumstances that is called life, it is my lot to-day thus legitimately to bear my recognition to the private excellence

and the public service, to the virtues and talents of Philip Rose¹

The Secretary has referred in his Report to what was done by that accomplished lady whose name you greeted with cheers, which she well deserved. It should be known to the public—it should be more than known—it should be graven on the public heart, that more than 1,600*l* was poured into your treasury on one morning by a stranger—by an artist, not in any way connected with the purposes of your institution. Why, it is only a day or two ago that in the newspapers I observed at a public dinner like the present, a meeting called together to promote a charity of a character more limited than this—I think it was for the benefit of governesses—that the same personage contributed a more than princely donation,—as much, I think, even as 200*l*, though she was not herself present on that occasion. Why, gentlemen, there is not a city in this Island that she has not visited, where she has not charmed with her talents, and where she has not renovated the charitable institutions that were in decay. I look upon the conduct of this lady as one of the most remarkable features of the age we live in. I know nothing in classic story, or in those feudal epochs when we are taught that the individual was more influential, when character was more forcible—I know nothing to be compared with the career of this admirable woman. Why, gentlemen, it almost reaches the high ideal of human nature, when we portray to ourselves a youthful maiden, innocent and benignant, in the possession of an unparalleled and omnipotent charm, alternately entrancing the heart of nations, and then kneeling at the tomb of suffering, of calamity, and of care. To me there is something most beautiful in this life of music and charity,—a life passed amid divine sounds and still diviner deeds. I honour the power of the artist. We hear of the kings and Cæsars of the world acknowledging the magic of her spell, bestowing on her the jewels, and offering to her the gorgeous tapestries of antique courts. But how great is the artist who can say, ‘Any morning in the saloon of a theatre I can assemble

¹ Honorary Secretary afterwards Sir Philip Rose Bart., and one of Lord Beaconsfield's executors.

the world together, and can support an institution and reward an individual ten thousand times more than any king or emperor!' I honour the purity of the artist. I think there is something not only unprecedented but transcendental in one living in the affluence of fame, never for a moment the victim of the inebriation of vanity, but when the riches of the world are poured at her feet, and the plaudits of millions ring in her ears, turning aside directly to feel the common sympathies of our common humanity, and of all her treasure instantly appropriating, as it were, her tithes to human nature.

It has been said that society has viewed the frailties of artists with a lenient eye. It has been considered that any deficiencies among those children of susceptibility should not be exposed to too severe a ken; and it is not for me—I am sure it is not the inclination of any one at this moment—to dispute a proposition that takes a softening view of the conduct of human nature. But it is due to one who has done so much, and done it so well,—it is due to her that we should publicly express our gratification that she lent to us not only the attraction of her incomparable talents but the sanction of her spotless name. And, gentlemen, I, for one, honour Jenny Lind above all things, because she has shown that she comprehends her position, and that a great artist, sustained by virtue, upheld by self-respect, and full of the magnificence of her mission, ranks in the highest class of human beings and human benefactors.

You will remember, also, that on this occasion you have been honoured by one, M. Guizot, whose presence, under any circumstances, and at any place, might well be gratifying. The purpose and beauty of your institution have summoned here to-night an individual who, in his retirement—his interesting and honourable retirement—lives, as it were, beneath its shadow. I know nothing that is more interesting than that this should have brought this gentleman to your table. This is not a place for political sentiments,—I utterly discard them; but I say this to any gentleman who cries 'Question,' that wherever I am, or whatever is spoken, however I may differ from indivi-

duals,—and I differ from the illustrious man on my left in many things,—this is always my rule, Homage to heroes!

I will recall you for a moment to the still small voice of Charity. I am sorry that anyone, from a mistaken feeling, should have interrupted for a moment the full flow of our sentiments. I wish to see cluster round our cause all opinions, all individuals, all that feel any sympathy with the sufferings of human nature. Is it possible that there can be anyone in this room who can introduce, on such an occasion, any party or sectarian sentiment? I thought here, at least, they were absent, I thought, at least, that this was consecrated ground for the best feelings of our common nature. Why, gentlemen, before I came here my carriage was stopped for a moment to receive two contributions to this charity, I opened them, and I found one of them from Sir Robert Inglis, which he requested me personally to present,—and the other was from Baron Rothschild.

When I came to take your chair to-day little did I think, when I accepted your invitation, that I should find upon my left hand my distinguished friend M. Guizot.¹ I have known him in his pride of place,—I have seen him among the great ones of the world,—I have seen the great ones of the world bow before him,—I have seen him in his hour of direst adversity, but I always found him the same,—because, gentlemen, great as he was in his station, he was greater in himself. Now, I say, it is most interesting that he should be here, that, living in Brompton, living in seclusion in that suburb, he should see this beautiful building consecrated to an admirable idea, and that he should come into the heart of the City of London, and say, 'I, too, will contribute, even in my fall, to the success of an institution that will outlive ministers and monarchs.'

Let us show to-night that we are sensible of this interesting incident. I say, it marks out this charity as one that I fervently believe has been peculiarly favoured by Providence in all its course,—that I believe there has been a combination of circumstances to interest the best feelings of our nature in its favour. Let us prove it. Let us now resolve that this institution shall not only flourish, but shall appear in its complete and perfect

¹ M. Guizot had attended on purpose to hear Mr. Disraeli.

form. Let us rise from this table with the same spirit that animated Sir Henry Foulis in his noble and admirable conduct—as animated Mr. Montgomery, in a course worthy of the times of the Crusades. Let us rise from this table, not as we would from some rich banquet to a common-place charity, but with the conviction that we are banded together to do a great deed, and that each of us will hereafter remember this night as one memorable in his existence, and will reflect with satisfaction, and even with delight, that he has drunk this toast, which I now propose,—‘Prosperity to the Hospital for Consumption.’

DEATH OF PRINCE ALBERT, Feb 6, 1862

[In speaking on the Address Mr Disraeli concluded his remarks with the following tribute to the late Prince Consort, who died in the previous December]

THERE are many other topics in the Speech which are not undeserving of attention, but I confess I am not myself inclined on this night to enter into minute criticism or controversy on these matters. No person can be insensible to the fact that the House meets to night under circumstances very much changed from those which have attended our assembling for many years. Of late years—indeed for more than twenty years past—whatever may have been our personal rivalries, and whatever our party strife, there was at least one sentiment in which we all concided, and that was a sentiment of admiring gratitude to that Throne whose wisdom and whose goodness had so often softened the acerbities of our free public life, and had at all times so majestically represented the matured intelligence of an enlightened people.

Sir, all that is changed. He is gone who was 'the comfort and support' of that Throne. It has been said that there is nothing which England so much appreciates as the fulfilment of duty. The Prince whom we have lost not only was eminent for the fulfilment of duty, but it was the fulfilment of the highest duty under the most difficult circumstances. Prince Albert was the Consort of his Sovereign—he was the father of one who might be his Sovereign—he was the Prime Councillor of a realm, the political constitution of which did not even recognise his political existence. Yet under these circumstances, so difficult and so delicate, he elevated even the Throne by the dignity and purity of his domestic life.

He framed and partly accomplished a scheme of education for the heir of England which proved how completely its august proprietor had contemplated the office of an English King. In the affairs of State, while his serene spirit and his elevated position bore him above all the possible bias of our party life, he showed on every occasion all the resources, all the prudence, and all the sagacity of an experienced and responsible statesman. Sir, I have presumed to touch upon three instances in which there was on the part of Prince Albert a fulfilment of duty—duty of the highest character under circumstances of the greatest difficulty. I will venture to touch upon another point in his character equally distinguished by fulfilment of duty, but in which the duty was not only fulfilled, but was created.

Although when he was adopted by this country he was, after all, but a youth of tender years, such was the character of his mind—at once observing and contemplative—that in due season he discovered, that notwithstanding all those great achievements which long centuries of internal concord and public liberty had permitted the energy and enterprise of Englishmen to achieve, there was still a great deficiency in our national character, which, if neglected, might lead to the impairing not only of our social happiness, but even of the sources of our public wealth. That was a deficiency of culture. But he was not satisfied with detecting a want; he resolved to supply it. His plans were deeply laid; they were maturely prepared; and notwithstanding the obstacles which he inevitably encountered, I am prepared to say they were eminently successful. What might have been his lot had he completed that term which is ordained as the average life of man, it might be presumption to predict. Perhaps he would have impressed upon his age not only his character but his name. But this, at least, posterity must admit, that he heightened the intellectual and moral standard of this country; that he extended and expanded the sympathies of classes; and that he most beneficially and intimately adapted to the productive powers of England the inexhaustible resources of science and art

Sir, it is sometimes deplored by those who admired and loved him that he was thwarted occasionally in his undertakings, and that he was not duly appreciated. But these are not circumstances for regret, but for congratulation. They prove the leading and original mind which has so long and so advantageously laboured for this country. Had he not encountered these obstacles, had he not been subject to this occasional distrust and misconception, it would only have shown that he was a man of ordinary mould and temper. Those who improve must change, those who change must necessarily disturb and alarm men's prejudices. What he had to encounter was only a demonstration that he was a man superior to his age, and therefore admirably adapted for the work of progress. There is one other point, and one only, on which I will presume for a moment to dwell, and it is not for the sake of you, Sir, or those who now hear me, or of the generation to which we belong, but it is that those who come after us may not misunderstand the nature of this illustrious man. Prince Albert was not a mere patron; he was not one of those who by their gold or by their smiles reward excellence or stimulate exertion. His contributions to the cause of State were far more powerful and far more precious. He gave to it his thought, his time, his toil; he gave to it his life. On both sides and in all parts of the House I see many gentlemen who occasionally have acted with the Prince at those council boards where they conferred and consulted upon the great undertakings with which he was connected. I ask them, without fear of a denial, whether he was not the leading spirit, whether his was not the mind which foresaw the difficulty, his not the resources that supplied the remedy; whether his was not the courage which sustained them under apparently overpowering difficulties; whether everyone who worked with him did not feel that he was the real originator of those plans of improvement which they assisted in carrying into effect?

But what avail these words? This House to night has been asked to condole with the Crown upon this great calamity. No easy office. To condole, in general, is the office of those who, without the pangs of sorrow, still feel for the sorrowing. But in

this instance the country is as heartstricken as its Queen. Yet in the mutual sensibility of a Sovereign and a people there is something ennobling—something which elevates the spirit beyond the level of mere earthly sorrow. The counties, the cities, the corporations of the realm—those illustrious associations of learning and science and art and skill, of which he was the brightest ornament and the inspiring spirit, have bowed before the Throne. It does not become the Parliament of the country to be silent. The expression of our feelings may be late, but even in that lateness may be observed some propriety. To-night the two Houses sanction the expression of the public sorrow, and ratify, as it were, the record of a nation's woe.

THE END.